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**O V E R V I E W****THE PROGRESS**

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) has a long history. Prior to its implementation in 1975, approximately 1 million children with disabilities were shut out of schools and hundreds of thousands more were denied appropriate services. Since then, the legislation changed the lives of these children. Many are learning and achieving at levels previously thought impossible. As a result, they are graduating from high school, going to college and entering the workforce at record-breaking unprecedented numbers.

Nearly percent of children with developmental disabilities were previously forced in state institutions. Today, they are no longer in those settings. As compared to their predecessors, five times the number of young people with disabilities are enrolled in colleges or universities, and twice as many of today's twenty-year-olds with disabilities are working.

**UNFULFILLED PROMISES**

While this is significant progress, we can and must do better. The status of children with disabilities still falls short of our expectations for them.

- Twice as many children with disabilities drop out of school.
- Drop outs do not return to school, have difficulty finding jobs and often end up in the criminal justice system.
- Girls who drop out often become young, unwed mothers — at a much higher rate than their non-disabled peers.
- Many children with disabilities are excluded from the curriculum and assessments used with their non-disabled classmates, limiting their possibilities of performing to higher standards of performance.

**STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS**

The new IDEA regulation is an attempt to remedy these and other problems that contribute to the barriers children with disabilities face.

IDEA will make these changes by:

- Raising expectations for children with disabilities.
- Increasing parental involvement in the education of their children.
- Ensuring that regular education teachers are involved in planning and assessing children's progress.

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- Including children with disabilities in classrooms, preference seats, and respect to the rights of children with disabilities
- Supporting quality preoccupation development for all personnel who are involved in educating children with disabilities

#### I.D.E.A. ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Over the past four decades, special education research has provided practical answers to questions about how best to educate deaf, disabled, children and youth with disabilities. These accomplishments have translated into realities for all our children:

- Over 1 million children, many of whom would have been placed in separate schools and institutions 25 years ago, are being educated in neighborhood schools, serving an average of \$1,000 per child per year.
- Nine percent more children with disabilities graduated from high school between 1974 and 1982.
- Youth court judges (I.D.E.A. are employed) work as their judge/advisor, older Americans with similar disabilities who were not served under their law.
- Nearly half of all adults with disabilities have successfully completed college work in college and universities.
- Although less than 1% of the annual expenditures to educate children with disabilities is spent on research and development, those dollars have had a significant result. They support programs that allow children with disabilities to become independent learners and self-appreciating adults.
- New knowledge has resulted in technologies that have enriched all our lives. For example, the Kurzweil machine, extremely developed for reading written text and translating it into Braille and speech was the first machine to do it machine. Speaking, an aid for the deaf, has helped them for older Americans with poor hearing and for those who are learning to read and speak English.

## Q U E S T I O N S & A N S W E R S

### 1. How will the new law help children with disabilities reach higher levels of achievement?

The 1982 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act which was signed into law June 4, 1982 by President Reagan, aims to strengthen expectations and accountability for the nation's 5.4 million children with disabilities, and bridge the gap that has too often existed between what those children learn and the regular curriculum.

From now on, the Individualized Education Program (IEP) — the plan that pulls out the educational goals for each child and the services he will receive for his education — must relate more closely to the general curriculum that children in regular classrooms require.

The law will also require regular progress reports to parents, include children with disabilities in state and district assessments and, in writing and reporting on performance goals as they do for nondisabled children.

Teachers will benefit from advancements in research through professional development initiatives

### 2. What about parents? How are parents involved in decisions about their child's education?

Parents involvement will increase under the new law. In fact, parents will now be included in pre-planning conferences for regular classroom placement of children with disabilities. Previously, it was often the case that parents only had a right to be consulted in IEP meetings. Parents now have a right to consent to periodic evaluations of their child's program, in addition to adult evaluations.

Currently, parents of children with disabilities rarely get regular reports from schools on their child's progress in achieving academic goals set forth on the IEP. The new law calls on schools to periodically report to parents or children with disabilities nearly 200 regular aspects items schools can track in their child's education by requiring regular progress reports, that are continually made for other parents.

### 3. Will more children with disabilities be placed in regular classroom settings under the law?

The new law is designed to remove financial incentives placing children in more separate settings where they could be assigned a regular classroom, and it will reduce separate classroom tracks in the schools at which the majority of children with disabilities are educated.

The new law also states some of the restrictions on how IDEA funds can be used for children served in regular classrooms. Specifically, such funds can be used for provision of services to children with disabilities in regular classroom settings even if non-disabled children benefit as well.

**4. How does the new law change the roles and responsibilities of regular classroom teachers?**

A critically important feature of the new law specifies that regular teachers will be part of the team that develops each child's IEP. That is especially important since the law removes barriers to placing disabled children in regular classroom settings and ties the education of children with disabilities more closely to the regular education curriculum.

The law requires that IEP's include the program modifications and supports for the child and teacher to enable the child to succeed in the classroom.

The law also provides continued federal support to improve teacher training nationwide, and adds support of teacher training programs in geographic areas with acute teacher shortages.

**5. How will IDEA 97 prevent inappropriate placements for minority children?**

Whether the child is a minority student or not, IDEA 97 emphasizes that for most children with disabilities, special education is not a place. Rather, special education is a set of services to support the needs of children with disabilities to succeed in general education classrooms.

For the first time, states will be required to gather data to ensure that school districts are not disproportionately identifying and placing children with disabilities from minority or limited English proficiency backgrounds in separate educational settings, and that such children are not being disproportionately suspended or expelled. In addition, in determining their education services, schools will be required to address the language needs of students who have limited English proficiency. Teachers will be provided training and research based knowledge to meet the special needs of these children.

**6. How will this law help school districts meet the costs of special education?**

The new law directs more federal dollars to school districts and allows them greater flexibility to meet the needs of children with disabilities in their schools. States and other public agencies will continue their level of support to school districts. Unnecessary vaccinations will be eliminated, saving school districts an estimated \$763 million per year.

**7. How does IDEA promote safe, well-disciplined schools?**

All children deserve safe and well-disciplined schools. For the first time, the new law sets out and clarifies how school discipline rules and the obligation to provide a Free Appropriate Public Education to disabled children fit together.

The law explicitly requires that children who need it receive instruction and services to help them follow the rules and get along in school.

However, the law also recognizes that if students bring a weapon or illegal drugs to school, schools have the right to remove children with disabilities to an alternative educational setting for up to 45 days. The

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new law permits schools to go to a hearing officer for an injunction to remove a child for up to 45 days if the child is considered substantially likely to injure himself or others. Previously, only a court had that authority. And the law also recognizes the right of schools to report crimes to law enforcement or judicial authorities.

At the same time, the law guarantees that children under suspension or expulsion would still receive special education services elsewhere.

**8. How does the law affect infants, toddlers, and preschoolers with disabilities?**

The law allows federal funding to rise to \$400 million for infants and toddlers programs from current appropriations of \$312 million. For preschoolers allowable funding is up to \$500 million up from current spending of \$360 million. It clarifies that infants and toddlers should receive services in the home or in other natural settings where possible. It also improves the coordination and transition for children from infant and toddler programs to pre-school programs.

**9. Will these changes and new requirements affect the number of lawsuits and due process hearings by parents and legal bills for school districts?**

When parents and school districts collaborate on children's education, conflict is minimized. IDEA 97 recognizes and encourages these positive relationships and non-adversarial methods of resolving disputes. The new law includes parental input in placement decisions and requires schools to report regularly to parents on their child's progress.

Under IDEA 97 states will make effective voluntary mediation available to parents and school districts as a less costly alternative to lawsuits. In the rare instances when it is necessary parents can still choose due process procedures.

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## State Improvement and Monitoring

One of the primary purposes of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is to assess the impact and effectiveness of laws and local efforts to provide early intervention and educational services to infants, children, youth, and young adults. Presently, through OSEP, the Department of Education assesses States' local early intervention programs, and utilizes these as a means for encouraging OSEP's performance by making grants available to congressional delegations and providing technical assistance, policy support, and monitoring oversight.

OSEP works in partnership with (1) States, early intervention services providers, families of infants and toddlers with disabilities, members of higher education advocacy groups, and others to ensure positive results for infants and toddlers and their families; and (2) State, parents, school districts, school administrators and teachers, members of higher education, students with disabilities and their families, advocacy groups, and others to ensure positive educational results for students with disabilities. OSEP uses research, demonstration, dissemination, systems studies, and other technical assistance strategies to provide States and local early intervention providers and educational agencies with tools to assist them in improving, revising,

OSEP has been working with States, parents, and other advocates over the past 5 years, and with over 200 project partners, from the environment of the United Nations in 1997, toologic OSEP's accountability work in a way that drives and supports improved results for infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities without sacrificing any effectiveness in ensuring that the individual rights of children with disabilities and their families are protected. In order to assure compliance that supports strong rights for people with disabilities, OSEP has update & re-structure process that has included the following:

- Providing ongoing technical assistance to States regarding legal requirements and best practice strategies for ensuring compliance at a Statewide and project specific level;
- Revising each State's waiver and regulations and other policy and operational assistance documents and documentation of the State's activities as general supervision responsibilities, including monitoring and complaint resolution;
- Conducting white papers and other activities to protect, reinforce, or policies and procedures that are consistent with the requirements of IDEA and their purpose reform and strong results.

- \* Ensuring protection of noncompliance in a manner that supports improved results and reform; and
- \* Engaging in ongoing communication with States, regional and State organizations, parents and advocates, and other constituents.

On February 17, 18, and 19, 1998, OSEP hosted a working meeting with diverse representatives from stakeholder groups, including State coordinators of early intervention services and directors of special education, Parent Training and Information Centers, Regional Resource Centers, the National Early Childhood Technical Assistance System (NECTAS), and parent and child advocacy groups. OSEP asked the participating stakeholders to help it define a vision for compliance with certain results-oriented requirements and to develop monitoring strategies to determine the level of implementation of the requirements. Finally, OSEP asked the participants to propose a monitoring system that would incorporate the results-oriented monitoring strategies. OSEP used the input from this very productive stakeholder meeting to design its Continuous Improvement Monitoring Process, which is built around the following critical themes:

**Continuity.** An effective accountability system must be continuous, rather than episodic, clearly linked to systemic change, and integrate self-assessment and continuous feedback and response.

**Partnership with Stakeholders.** OSEP must be a partner with parents, students, State and local educational agencies, and other federal agencies in a collaborative process in which stakeholders are part of the entire process, including the setting of goals and benchmarks, the collection and analysis of self-assessment data, the identification of critical issues and solutions to problems, and the development, implementation, and oversight of improvement strategies to ensure compliance and improved results for children and youth with disabilities.

**State Accountability.** States must assume accountability for measuring and reporting progress, identifying weaknesses, and identifying and implementing strategies for improvement.

**Self-Assessment.** Each State must work with stakeholders to design and implement an ongoing self-assessment process that is focused on improving results for children and youth with disabilities and that facilitates continuous feedback and use of information to support continuous improvement. OSEP will periodically visit programs in the State to verify the self-assessment.

**Data Driven.** The continuous improvement monitoring process in each State will be driven by data that focus on improved results for children and youth with disabilities. Each State will collect and use data on an ongoing basis, aligned with the State's performance goals and indicators, with regular OSEP review. States and OSEP will compare data across State, school districts, and early intervention services providers to identify needs and strategies for improvement. Some of the available data which can be critical in the self-assessments and validation process include those regarding graduation and dropout rates, performance of students with disabilities on state- and district-wide assessments, rates at which children with disabilities are suspended and/or expelled from school, and identification and placement of students from minority backgrounds.

**Public Process.** It is important that the self-assessment and monitoring process be public and that self-assessment results, monitoring reports, and improvement plans be broadly disseminated.

**Technical Assistance.** Because the focus of the monitoring process is continuous improvement, technical assistance is a crucial component. Therefore, OSEP will prioritize the provision of such assistance as a component of its on-site work in each State. States will be encouraged to include a technical assistance plan as part of their corrective/improvement plan and utilize the Regional Resource Centers and NECTAAs to provide and broker technical assistance throughout the continuous improvement process. A key component in technical assistance will be the identification and dissemination of promising practices.

OSEP continues its continuous improvement monitoring process to meet the needs in each State. In States where there is evidence of substantial compliance with IDEIA requirements, OSEP's focus is on the identification and implementation of promising practices. In States that are not demonstrating compliance, OSEP works with the State to develop improvement strategies. States that fail to correct identified deficiencies may be subject to enforcement actions such as special conditions on grant awards, compliance agreement, or withholding of funds.

The continuous improvement monitoring cycle is ongoing and consists of the following phases:

**Self-assessment.** The State works with a steering committee of stakeholders who represent diverse perspectives to develop and implement a self-assessment to evaluate the State's effectiveness in achieving compliance and in improving results for children and youth with disabilities and their families.

**Validation Planning.** The steering committee, made up of representatives of stakeholders groups and selected by the basic education agency (SEA) and lead agency, works with OSEP staff to plan strategies for validating the self-assessment results, including, if appropriate, outcome collection of data. The validation planning stage includes meetings to obtain focused public input, review the self-assessment, and develop a monitoring plan, which can include future and/or on-site strategies.

**Validation Data Collection.** During this phase, OSEP collects validation data, presents those data to the steering committee in a structured conference, and works with the steering committee to plan the reporting and public awareness processes. OSEP's data collection may include data collection at both the State and local levels.

**Improvement Planning.** Based upon the self-assessment and validation results, the steering committee develops an improvement plan that addresses both compliance and improvement of results for children and youth with disabilities and includes outcomes, benchmarks, and indicators of improvement. OSEP encourages States to include their Regional Resource Center and/or NECTAS in the development of the improvement plan, in order to facilitate the effective inclusion of technical assistance at both planning and implementation of the improvement plan.

**Implementation of Improvement Strategies.** The State implements and evaluates the effectiveness of the improvement plan.

**Verification and Consequences.** Based upon documentation that OSEP receives from the State and steering committee, OSEP verifies effectiveness of the actions taken in implementing the improvement plan. Where the State has been effective in achieving verifiable improvement, positive consequences may include public recognition. If a State does not implement the improvement plan, or implementation is not effective, OSEP may need to impose sanctions, which could include OSEP's pre-emption of improvement actions, a noncompliance agreement, or other enforcement actions.

**Review and Revision of Self-assessment.** Based on the results of the previous improvement planning cycle, the State reviews, and as appropriate revises, the self-assessment.

OSEP has focused its continuous improvement monitoring process on those areas that are most closely associated with positive results for children with disabilities. To help OSEP and States focus on those areas, OSEP has clustered

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1. Part C (services for children ages birth through 2) requirements into five major areas:
    - \* General Supervision,
    - \* Child Find and Public Awareness,
    - \* Early Intervention Services in Natural Environments,
    - \* Family Centered Systems of Services, and
    - \* Early Childhood Transition.
  2. Part B (services for children ages 3 through 21) requirements into four major areas:
    - \* Parent Involvement,
    - \* Free Appropriate Public Education in the Least Restrictive Environment,
    - \* Secondary Transition, and
    - \* General Supervision.

In order to assist States in the self-assessment of their systems for early intervention and special education services, and to guide OSPI's review of those systems, OSPI developed "cluster charts," that included results-focused State and local indicators for each of the nine domains listed above. The self-assessment and monitoring process incorporates use of the cluster areas through the following steps:

- \* Identifying indicators for measuring progress in the implementation of IDEA;
- \* Identifying potential data sources and gathering data pertinent to the indicators;
- \* Analyzing the data to determine the positive and negative differences between the indicators as stated and their status; and
- \* Identifying promising practices and developing improvement and maintenance strategies.

**Table IV-5**  
**Schedule of 1999-2000 Continuous Improvement Monitoring Reviews**

North Dakota August/September 1999	Utah October/December 1999	New York February/March 1999
Nebraska August/October 1999	Arizona October 1999/January 1999	Montana March/April 1999
Washington August/September 1999	Wisconsin November 1999/February 1999	South Dakota March/April 1999
New Mexico October/December 1999	Massachusetts November 1999/February 1999	State Office of Indian Affairs (Data collected during North Dakota, New Mexico, and South Dakota visits)

Source: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs, Division of Monitoring and State Improvement Planning.

OSEP conducted 12 continuous improvement monitoring reviews during the 1998-99 school year. During the 1999-2000 school year, OSEP conducted six reviews, as well as the validation/planning visit component for two additional states. OSEP will conclude the validation data collection visits for those two States at the beginning of the 2000-01 school year. In addition, in 1999-2000 OSEP made a visit to Illinois for Part B follow-up, and two CAP visits to California. Table IV-5 shows the schedule of the 1998-99 school year reviews. Table IV-6 lists the 1999-2000 reviews.<sup>1</sup>

OSEP's monitoring reports for the 1998-99 and 1999-2000 school year reviews are, like the self-assessment, validation planning, and data collection processes, focused around the five Part C and four Part B clusters described above. The following is a summary of the strengths and areas of noncompliance that OSEP identified in the monitoring reports that it has issued based upon visits in the 1998-99 school year:

#### Part C: General Supervision and Administration

The state lead agency is responsible for developing and maintaining a statewide, comprehensive, coordinated, multidisciplinary, interagency early intervention system. Administration, supervision, and monitoring of the early intervention system are essential to ensure that each eligible child and family receives the services needed to enhance the development of infants and toddlers with disabilities and to maximize

<sup>1</sup> Monitoring reports are available online at <http://www.ed.gov/ohio/2000/OSERS/OSEP> or by writing to the OSEP director at the Department of Education.

**Table IV-6**  
Schedule of 1999-2000 Continuous Improvement Monitoring Reviews

Dates: September 1999 (Part B Survey/IC follow-up) Ohio August/October 1999 Maryland September/October 1999 Louisiana November 1999/January 2000 Arkansas November 1999/January 2000	Colorado November 1999/January 2000 Florida December 1999/January 2000 New Jersey February/September 2000 Pennsylvania March/October 2000 California January/April 2000 (CSP visit)
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Source: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs, Division of Monitoring and State Improvement Planning.

their potential for developmental delay. Early intervention services are provided by a wide variety of public and private entities. Through supervision and monitoring, the State ensures that all agencies and individuals providing early intervention services meet the requirements of IDEA, whether or not they receive funds under Part C.

While each State must meet its general supervisory and administrative responsibilities, the State may determine how that will be accomplished. Mechanisms such as interagency agreements and/or contracts with other State-level or private agencies can serve as the vehicle for the lead agency's implementation of its monitoring responsibilities. The State's role in supervision and monitoring includes (1) identifying areas in which implementation does not comply with Federal requirements; (2) providing assistance in correcting identified problems; and (3) as needed, using enforcement mechanisms to ensure correction of identified problems.

During Part C monitoring, OSIP identified strengths in the General Supervision Charter in the following areas: (1) Interagency Coordinating Councils with strong parent representation and active participation by agencies involved in providing services for infants, toddlers, and their families and (2) an effective Interagency Coordinating Council resulting in effective practices in the areas of personnel preparation, effective interagency agreements, and innovative and family-centered practices leading to improved results for infants, toddlers and their families. In addition, OSIP discovered that some States have sophisticated data collection systems that provide them with information to effectively plan in all areas of the early intervention system to ensure appropriate family-centered services. One State has implemented a joint monitoring process that minimizes duplication of effort and

promotes efficiency. These interagency monitoring activities have been effective in identifying and correcting deficiencies in the Part C program.

Areas of noncompliance identified by OSEB included States that do not have an effective or complete monitoring system to ensure compliance with all Part C requirements. There is wide variation in States' monitoring capacities and in the components that are covered in a State's monitoring system. Some States have not yet conducted a systematic monitoring and evaluation of their Part C programs. Other States that have conducted monitoring activities have not included important components of Part C, such as monitoring for cultural responsiveness and family-centered practices, ensuring that eligible children and families are receiving all needed services, timely evaluation and assessment activities, and individualized family service plans (IFSP) development, ensuring dissemination of positive awareness materials by primary referral sources; and a variety of other aspects of Part C requirements. States that identify non-compliance often frequently have ineffective improvement actions in enforcement responses, as the same issues recur in subsequent monitoring by the State and were also identified during OSEB's examining activities. Furthermore, some States are neglecting to ensure that all programs and agencies providing early intervention services are in compliance with Part C, especially if the service provider is another State agency.

#### Part C: Child Find/Public Awareness

The needs of infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families are generally met through a variety of agencies. However, prior to the enactment of Part C of IDEA, there was little coordination or collaboration for service provision, and many families had difficulty locating and obtaining needed services. Searching for resources proved a year-long task for families. With the passage of Part C in 1986, Congress sought to ensure that all children needing services would be identified, evaluated, and served, especially those children who are typically underrepresented, (e.g., minority, low-income, minority, American Indian, and rural populations), through an integrated, multidisciplinary system of early intervention services.

Each State's early intervention system must include collaborative child find and public awareness activities that are coordinated with all other child find efforts in the State. Part C recognizes the need for early referral and short timelines for evaluation because development occurs at a more rapid rate during the first 3 years of life than at any other age. Research in early brain development has demonstrated when early interventions have known for years—that children begin to learn and develop from the moment of birth. Therefore, the facilitation of early learning and the prevention of timely early intervention services to infants and toddlers with disabilities are critical.

OSEC observed areas of strength in States' public awareness campaigns. For example, (1) An effective statewide multimedia public awareness campaign is reaching urban areas; (2) State early intervention staff participate in statewide early childhood initiatives to promote awareness of Part C; (3) program materials are available in multiple languages and easy-to-read formats; (4) funds are provided to reservation tribes for development of materials to foster child find activities for Native American children. OSEC proposed strengths in States' comprehensive child find systems in one State, legislation is in place that provides the right to an evaluation for all children ages birth to 5 years. Children do not need to be impaired of a developmental delay to receive this evaluation. Another State has an early childhood tracking system that is effective in identification of at-risk children. Under this system, parents register, beginning at the child's birth, and complete a monthly questionnaire that, in turn, is reviewed by child development specialists. In a third State, screening activities are broadly advertised, and ensure public awareness materials are used to encourage parents to attend screening activities.

OSEC identified the following areas of non-compliance in the Child Find and Public Awareness cluster:

- Part C requires States to establish a public awareness program that focuses on the early identification of eligible children and that informs the general public how to make referrals and access evaluations and services. OSEC found that public awareness programs typically are not adequate to inform the general public about the provision of early intervention services; materials are not being disseminated broadly enough to reach the general public; and materials are not appropriate or easily understood for rural parents and tribes residing on reservations. These problems exist because of lack of an ongoing, systematic campaign of public awareness activities.
- Part C requires States to implement a coordinated, comprehensive statewide child find system with all other relevant major State agencies (education, health and social services programs), and other local and tribal organizations. OSEC found that States typically do not have State or local systems to coordinate and support a coordinated child find system to locate and identify children and not duplicate efforts unnecessarily. In addition, child find is not being coordinated with tribes and tribal organizations receiving funds under Part C. These issues are occurring, in part, due to lack of clear guidance and procedures from the State lead agency.
- States must have an effective method for primary referral sources to make referrals and to ensure that referrals are made no more than 2 working days after a child has been identified. OSEC found that many partners refer children, including the medical community and other public and private

agencies, either do not understand the appropriate referral procedures when referring a child suspected of developmental delay and in need of early intervention services, or are not aware of the early intervention system, are not referring children to the system, or the agency cannot prevent referral. These problems exist, in part, due to lack of effective outreach and communication methods to the medical community and public and private agencies.

- Part C requires that, within 45 days of receiving a referral, a State must ensure the completion of a comprehensive, multidisciplinary evaluation and assessment of the child's strengths and needs and identify services to meet those needs through the IFSP process. OSEP found that delays are occurring in the initial evaluation and assessment of children referred to the early intervention system and that not all required services are being identified within the 45-day timeline. Delays are occurring for a variety of reasons, including personnel shortages, lack of timely assignment of an initial service coordinator responsible for ensuring completion of the evaluation, and travel requirements in each family residing in rural communities. OSEP also found that all required services are not being identified because the initial evaluation is not sufficiently comprehensive to identify services to meet the child's needs.

### Part C: Early Intervention in Natural Environments

In creating the Part C legislation, Congress recognized the urgent need to ensure that all infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families receive early intervention services according to their individual needs. Three of the principles on which Part C was enacted include: (1) enhancing the child's developmental potential, (2) enhancing the capacity of families to meet the needs of their infant or toddler with disabilities, and (3) improving and expanding existing early intervention services being provided to children with disabilities and their families.

To assist families in this process, Congress also required that each family be provided with a service coordinator, to act as a single point of contact for the family. The service coordinator assures that the rights of children and families are protected, arranges for assessments and IFSP meetings, and facilitates the provision of needed services. The service coordinator coordinates required early intervention services, as well as medical and other services the child and the child's family may need. With a single point of contact, families are relieved of the burden of searching for essential services, negotiating with multiple agencies, and trying to coordinate their own service needs.

Part C requires the development and implementation of an IFSP for each eligible child. The evaluation, assessment, and IFSP process are designed to ensure that appropriate evaluation and assessments of the unique needs of the child and of the family related to enhancing the development of their child are conducted in a timely manner. Parents are active members of the IFSP multidisciplinary team. The team must take into consideration all the information obtained through the evaluation and brief and timely assessments in determining the appropriate services needed to meet the needs.

The IFSP must also include a statement of the natural environments in which early intervention services will be provided for the child. Children with disabilities should receive services in community settings and places where normally developing children would be found, so that they will be denied opportunities that all children have to be included in all aspects of our society. In 1991, Congress required that early intervention services be provided in natural environments. This requirement was further reinforced by the addition of a new requirement in 1997 that early intervention can occur in a setting other than a natural environment only where early intervention cannot be achieved satisfactorily for the infant or toddler in a natural environment. In the event that early intervention cannot be satisfactorily achieved in a natural environment, the IFSP must include a justification of the extent, if any, to which the services will not be provided in a natural environment.

OSEP identified strengths in the Early Intervention Services in the Bureau of Indian Affairs Cluster in a number of States. Examples of promising practices that OSEP found in a variety of States include: (1) the formalized coordination of the social services, health, schools, Indian health services, and service provider agencies in each local area of a State to ensure coordinated services to infants and toddlers and their families; (2) coordination with Medicaid to utilize a differential funding formula for Medicaid reimbursement for services that are conducive to providing early intervention services at home and child care settings; and (3) development of a sophisticated system of identifying competencies and degree requirements for service coordinators, professionals, and paraprofessionals who work with infants and toddlers to ensure a holistic approach to early intervention and integration of services for this population.

In the area of noncompliance, OSEP found a variety of service coordination mechanisms in the regulations. Not all States appoint a single service coordinator to complete all of the services coordination duties specified by the regulations; thus requiring families to continue to identify some of their own resources and services. In some States, service coordinators are not assisting families in the identification of family needs and the supports and services needed by families to address those needs; and, in cases where services for families are identified, these services are not included on the IFSP.

In some States, OSEB found that evaluations and assessments are not completed within the timeline required, and some evaluations and assessments are delayed for several weeks to several months, creating a delay in needed services. Multidisciplinary evaluations are not completed in all developmental areas, and frequently, there are not enough service providers to complete evaluations in a timely manner. OSEB found that several factors are not using the IFSP process to make individual determinations for eligible children and families concerning natural environments for provision of services. Some States are still providing services as aggregated centers, without participation in the IFSP, where children without disabilities would not normally participate. In addition, some States do not include all of the services an eligible child and family needs on the IFSP, only including those services that are available. Some States fail to include on the IFSP other specially-interim services that the child needs, as required by Part C, to make the IFSP a comprehensive document.

OSEB found that not all services listed on IFSPs were actually being provided. In some instances, services are reduced or not provided in the summer months, for reasons unrelated to a child's needs. In some States, eligible children are not receiving services due to the failure of the State to provide transportation to families in need of that service. Finally, OSEB found that in several States, the IFSP team process was not being used to determine services.

#### **Part C: Family-Centered Services**

Research has shown that improved outcomes for young children are most likely to occur when services are based on the premise that parents or primary caregivers are the most important because influencing a child's development. Family-centered practices are those in which families are involved in all aspects of the decision-making, members' culture and values are respected, and families are provided with accurate and sufficient information to be able to make informed decisions. A family-centered approach keeps the focus on the developmental needs of the child while including family concerns and needs in the decision-making process. Family-centered processes include establishing trust and rapport with families and helping families develop skills to best meet their child's needs.

Parents and other family members are recognized as the lymphatics of Part C. As such, States must include parents as an integral part of decision making and service provision, from assessments through development of the IFSP, to transition activities before their child turns 3. Parents bring a wealth of knowledge about their own child's and family's abilities and dreams for their future, as well as an understanding of the community in which they live.

In 1996, Part C of IDEA was reauthorized as the first Federal legislation to specifically target attention to the needs of the family related to enhancing the development of children with disabilities. In enacting Part C, Congress acknowledged the need to support families and enhance their capacity to meet the needs of their infants and toddlers with disabilities. On the cutting edge of education legislation, Part C challenged systems of care to focus on the family as the user of services, rather than the child. Viewing the child in the context of her/his family and the family in the context of its community, Congress created certain challenges for States as they designed and implemented a family-centered system of services.

OSIF found that States used a variety of methods to ensure and improve family participation in the provision of early intervention services for infants and toddlers. Several states have organized and systematized programs for parent involvement, including local family liaisons, parent-to-parent support networks, programs to assist parents in navigating the system, and a program to train parents to be advocates and to participate on local and state government committees. In these States, parents assist in the development of training materials and public awareness materials. The State Interagency Coordinating Council meets at meetings to various locations around the State to allow more parents to attend and participate in the activities of the Council. These States also provide information in family friendly language and so a variety of dialects to assist families to be able to participate.

OSIF included findings related to this Cluster in the Early Intervention Services in Natural Environments section of this report.

#### Part C: Early Childhood Transition

Congress included provisions to ensure that preschool or other appropriate services would be provided to eligible children leaving early intervention at age 3. Transition is a multifaceted process to prepare the child and the child's family to leave early intervention services. Congress recognized the importance of coordination and cooperation between the educational agency and the early intervention system by requiring that a specific set of activities occur as part of a transition plan. Transition activities typically include: (1) identification of steps to be taken to prepare the child for changes in service delivery and to help the child adjust to a new setting, (2) preparation of the family (e.g., discussions, training, visitations), and (3) dissemination of other programs and services for which a child might be eligible. Transition planning for children who may be eligible for Part B preschool services must initially scheduling a meeting, with approval of the family, among the lead agency, the educational agency, and the family, at least 90 days (with parental permission up to 6 months) prior to the child's third birthday. Transition of children who are not eligible for special education also includes convening a meeting to make

functions or choosing other appropriate community-based services. For all Part C children, States must review the child's program options for the period from the child's third birthday through the remainder of the school year and must establish a transition plan.

Strengths identified during OSEP's monitoring activities in the Transition Chapter for Part C included activities leading to smooth transitions for children and families. Some States have established a committee to develop interagency plans for transition, developing local and State interagency agreements and mechanisms of understanding, especially where the SEAs is not the Part C lead agency. States have developed a variety of interagency training techniques for providers and parents regarding transition, including specific training for parents and joint training for staff of each agency. Transition guides have also been developed at local levels and providers in the transition process.

OSEP also identified noncompliance issues during the monitoring visit for Part C. Some States do not hold the transition meeting at least 90 days before the child's third birthday, sometimes waiting until only a few weeks before the child turns 3. Other States do not hold a transition meeting at all for those children who are eligible for Part B or for those who will transition to community services. That practice results in failure to provide services by the child's third birthday and, in some instances, failure to provide services until the child is 4. Some States do not include transition plans in the IFSP; i.e., for transition planning, the IFSP only states that the child will transition, without the appropriate steps to prepare the child and the child's family for transition out of Part C.

#### Part B: Parent Involvement

A purpose of the IDEA Amendments of 1997 is to expand and permit opportunities for parents and school personnel to work in new partnerships at the State and local levels. Parents must now have an opportunity to participate in meetings with respect to the identification, evaluation, and educational placement of their child and the provision at a free appropriate public education to their child. Parental involvement has long been recognized as an important indicator of a school's success, and parent involvement has positive effects on children's attitudes and social behavior. Partnerships positively affect achievement, improve teachers' attitudes toward the school, and benefit school personnel as well.

With the enactment of the IDEA Amendments of 1997, OSEP's work is shaping an accountability in a way that drives and supports improved results for infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities mentioned in order to ensure compliance with the amendments, which support positive results for people with

databases, OSEP designed a multifaceted process. Among the Part B requirements that provide the strongest links to improved educational results for students with disabilities are those addressing the participation of parents and students and general and special education personnel in the development and implementation of educational programs for children with disabilities. One of the two major areas in which Part B requirements are clustered for children ages 3 through 21 is parent involvement.

Since the enactment of the IDEA Amendments of 1997, OSEP has identified specific strategies in the Part B Parent Involvement Clusters in a number of States. OSEP's review of States using its new performance monitoring process found the following examples of these promising practices: (1) joint training in some States where States and parent groups collaborate with Parent Training and Information Centers on the 1997 amendments; (2) jointly developed training materials for use by parents and personnel; and (3) the successful use of mediation as a process for conflict resolution where parents report that they feel heard and valued as partners in mediation. In a number of instances, OSEP found that parents and communities provide strong support to the educational process, with families very involved in the educational programs for their children and, specifically, the school activities involving parents in meetings concerning their child's special education.

Issues of noncompliance identified by OSEP include findings that in some States, parents are not part of the group that receives existing evaluation data to determine whether a child has a disability. In these cases, parents are also not part of the reevaluation process to determine whether the child continues to have a specific disability, and parents are not included on the multidisciplinary team that makes the placement decision for the child.

#### Part II Free Appropriate Public Education in the Least Restrictive Environment

The provision of a FAPE appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment is the foundation of IDEA. The provisions of the statute and regulations (evaluations, individualized education programs (IEPs), parent and student involvement, transition, participation in large-scale assessments, eligibility and placement decisions, service provision, etc.) exist to achieve this single purpose. It means that children with disabilities receive educational services at no cost to their parents and that the services provided meet their unique learning needs. These services are provided, to the maximum extent appropriate, with children who do not have disabilities and, unless their IEP requires some other arrangement, in the school they would attend if they did not have a disability. Any removal of children with disabilities from the regular educational environment occurs only when the nature or

severity of the disability is such that education in regular classes, with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily.

The Committee Report of the Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources and the House of Representatives Committee on Education and the Workforce for the 1997 amendment emphasized that too many students with disabilities are failing courses and dropping out of school. Those reports noted that almost twice as many children with disabilities drop out as compared to students without disabilities. They expressed a further concern about the continued inappropriate placement of children from minority backgrounds and children with limited English proficiency in special education. The Committees stated their concern that "Once a child has been identified as being eligible for special education, the connection between special education and related services and the child's opportunity to experience and benefit from the general education curriculum should be strengthened. The majority of children identified as eligible for special education and related services are capable of participating in the general education curriculum in varying degrees with some adaptations and modifications. This provision is intended to ensure that children's special education and related services are in addition to and are affected by the general education curriculum, not separate from it."

OSEP identified strengths in the Free Appropriate Public Education in the Less Restrictive Environment Clause in a number of States. Several States were commended for the activities they had developed to ensure that appropriately trained administrators, teachers, paraprofessionals, and related services personnel are located and available to meet the identified needs of all children with disabilities. Efforts taken to recruit personnel after they have been hired were also recognized. Examples of these activities include the creation of a recruitment website or website local districts to locate qualified personnel, upgrading of the special education teacher certification requirements, development of minimum competencies for paraprofessionals, and the development of unique approaches to recruit qualified staff in rural areas. Other examples of staff development include the creation of an inclusive education learning project for school districts to assist them in enacting and implementing inclusive educational practices and the development of an educational interpreter certificate project which utilizes distance learning and summer programs to deliver instruction to educational interpreters. In one State, new endorsement requirements were implemented for teachers who had requested enhancement for birth through age 8 programs that would require coursework focusing on the unique needs of students within that age range.

Particularly noteworthy were the initiatives taken by some States to address the needs of students with behavioral disorders. The creation of statewide projects and other mechanisms, such as the use of assessment instruments, to provide comprehensive

staff development to improve the capacities of schools and communities are among the initiatives taken to address the needs of this population.

A few States were recognized for the steps taken to address the needs of students from birth to age 9. One State expanded the developmental delay category to age 9, giving school districts the option of providing services to younger children without having to lock the child into an eligibility category which may be inappropriate or incorrect. Another State increased the size of the State staff responsible for providing linkages to other State level transition services for young children and their families.

Other strengths which demonstrate the variety of innovative initiatives for providing a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment include the following:

- Data gathering improvements, such as the development of a single State-level student information management system to collect data across programs and the development of a system that allows one base or collaborator between various programs to collect dispensary/expulsion data for all students, including students with disabilities;
- Close working relationships with the State Advisory Panel to formulate policy and guidance for implementing the 1997 amendments;
- Creation of a financial safety net or the special education funding formula to ensure that all eligible children and youth with disabilities receive a free appropriate public education by providing State funds for students requiring high-cost services and to districts receiving less State special education revenue than the previous year;
- Proactive steps to increase the involvement of children with disabilities in state- and district-wide assessment programs.

The areas of noncompliance that OSEP identified within the Free Appropriate Public Education in the Least Restrictive Environment Cluster focused on requirements in the following areas:

- Removal of children from regular education settings only when the nature and severity of disability is such that education in regular classes, with the use of supplementary aides and supports, cannot be achieved satisfactorily.

lack of supplementary aids and services, inadequate number of appropriately trained staff, and an inadequate supply of qualified staff are factors that affect decisions about removal of students from regular education classes. Students with emotional disturbance or intellectual or multiple disabilities tend to be inappropriately placed in segregated classes more often. In some instances, placement decisions continue to be based on the intensity of service level and disability category rather than on the unique needs of the child.

• Transition from Part C to B

Some States did not consistently ensure that public agencies carry out a smooth and effective transition to Part B services. For example, collaboration among local staff is limited, and communication often leads to philosophical disagreements about evaluations, timelines or no transition meetings, and inappropriate breaks in services for young children. In some cases, school staff does not consistently participate when needed in transition planning meetings. In other instances, transition for all children occurs at the beginning of the school year, regardless of the child's birthday, resulting in some children not receiving their needed services until after they turn 3 years of age.

• Extended school year services.

Students in some States are not receiving extended school year services, in accordance with an appropriate IEP. This violation seems to be related to a lack of understanding about this requirement and a need for additional training about the process and criteria for receiving extended school year services.

• Qualified staff to provide special education and related services.

States did not consistently ensure that public agencies have an adequate supply of qualified special education and related services personnel necessary to carry out the purposes of IDEA. This is especially true with teachers qualified to serve students with severe behavior disorders, as well as related service providers such as speech therapists, physical therapists, occupational therapists, and individuals qualified to provide psychological counseling. These shortages result in students not receiving needed services; delays in the provision of services; failure to provide students access to the general education curriculum due to lack of supports; including behavioral supports; provision of part-time services because services are provided by unqualified and untrained staff; provision of services on a consultative basis in order to "stretch" staff availability; and discontinuance of direct services to allow time for conducting evaluations.

- Related services—psychological counseling.

Findings related to the provision of psychological counseling indicated that the type and amount of these services are limited at that they are offered based on the category of disability or the grade level, rather than on the individual needs of the child. In some cases, parents pay for these services even when they are determined necessary by the IEP team for the child to benefit from special education. When psychological counseling is provided by an outside agency, it is rarely integrated into the student's IEP.

#### Part B: Secondary Transition

The National Longitudinal Transition Study found that the rate of competitive employment for youth with disabilities out of school for 3 to 5 years was 57 percent, compared to an employment rate of 60 percent for youth in the general population. The study identified several factors that were associated with post-school success in obtaining employment and earning higher wages for youth with disabilities. These include completing high school, spending more time in regular education, and taking vocational education in secondary school. The study also shows that post school success is associated with youths who had a transition plan in high school that specified an outcome, such as employment, as a goal. The secondary transition requirements of IDEA focus on the active involvement of students in transition planning, consideration of student's preferences and interests by the IEP team, and the reflection, in the IEP, of a coordinated set of activities within an outcome-oriented process which promotes movement from school to post-school activities. Through parent and student involvement, along with the involvement of all agencies that can provide transition services, student needs can be appropriately identified and services provided that best meet those needs.

Strengths identified by OSEP in the Secondary Transition Cluster in a number of States include: (1) State education agency (SEA) funding of transition coordinator positions; (2) increased interagency collaboration with other agencies likely to provide transition related services, including the local vocational rehabilitation agency; (3) partnerships with industry and schools-to-work initiatives; (4) development of State Transition Coordinating Councils and Transition Task Forces to address transition from secondary to postsecondary education; (5) SEA grants to expand self advocacy, job training, and postsecondary program admissions; (6) an SEA follow-up longitudinal study; and (7) linkages with institutions of higher education.

Consistent with monitoring findings from previous years, OSEP found that in some States, there seems to be little movement in resolving noncompliance in the

following areas: (1) lack of student and other agency participation in the development of transition plans due to the failure of the local education agency to invite and ensure participation of the student and other agency representatives; (2) failure to adequately notify parents regarding the IEP meeting for which the purpose is the discussion of transition services, calling parents to be unprepared to discuss transition needs and options at the meeting; (3) lack of statements for students, beginning at age 14, of needed transition services to begin at age 16 to ten years of determined appropriate by the IEP team; and (4) a lack of understanding of the transition requirements, specifically interests and preferences of the student, related services, and course of study.

In addition to these areas of noncompliance, OSBP also identified suggestions for improved results, including determination of appropriate agency linkages, development of interagency agreements/memoranda of understanding, increased collaboration with other agencies, provision of training on the implementation of transition requirements to parents, students, and service providers; increased understanding of, involvement in, and availability of independent living centers, increased availability of community experience of Native American students residing on reservations; and the development of culturally sensitive transition plans to meet the needs of these students.

#### Part II: General Supervision

IDEA assigns responsibility to SEAs for ensuring that its requirements are met and that all educational programs for children with disabilities, including all such programs administered by any other State or local agency, are under the general supervision of individuals in the State who are responsible for educational programs for children with disabilities and that these programs meet the established standards of the SEA. State support and involvement at the local level are crucial to the successful implementation of the provisions of IDEA. To carry out their responsibilities, States provide dispute resolution mechanisms (mediation, complaint resolution, and due process), monitor the implementation of Federal and State statutes and regulations, establish standards for personnel development and certification as well as educational programs, and provide technical assistance and training across the State. Effective general supervision promotes positive student outcomes by promoting appropriate educational services to children with disabilities, ensuring the successful and timely correction of identified deficiencies, and providing personnel who work with children with disabilities the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to carry out their assigned responsibilities.

OSBP identified strengths in the General Supervision Cluster in a number of States. Examples of promising practices include statewide training opportunities through

the SEA, the establishment of interagency collaboration to benefit children and families, intervention through an early assistance program to intervene in disputes prior to filing a complaint or due process hearing, a recognized personnel development system, school district accountability for results for children with disabilities, access to a "fidelity of" fund that may be utilized by school districts to offset high special education costs, and a data collection system (e.g., As) that can provide a wide array of information.

OSERS also identified noncompliance in the General Supervision Cluster in States that were monitored. Examples of noncompliance include the SEA not assuring that school-aged incarcerated individuals with disabilities are identified and provided special education services; a monitoring system that was ineffective in identifying and correcting noncompliances in some public agencies; and the completion of due process hearings outside the required 45-day timeline.

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# **Summary of Funded State Improvement Grant Applications in 2000**

**October 2000**

Available electronically at <http://dse.org/religes.htm>

Compiled by Jane Storms and Leslie Sullivan,  
Western Regional Resource Center

*Region 1, Northwest RRC*

*Region 2, MidSouth RRC*

*Region 3, Southeast RRC*

*Region 4, Great Lakes Area RRC*

*Region 5, Mountain Plains RRC*

*Region 6, Western RRC*

*Karen Mikkelsen*

*Lynne Bright and Marlene Rice*

*Eric Dickson and Linda Smith*

*Carol Burris and Michael Harganess*

*Jack Rudo*

*Skinny Coale and Clay Martin*

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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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Karl Murray, Professional Development Leadership Academy, Enhancing Collaborative Partnerships for Systemic Change

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Summary of Funded State Improvement Grants in 2000  
October 2000

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*Summary of Funded State Improvement Grants in 2000  
October 2000*

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*Summary of Funded State Improvement Grants in 1995*  
*December 1995*

## Introduction

The purpose of this summary is to provide a brief overview of the funded State Improvement Grants funded in 2000. Regional Resource Center staff summarized State Improvement Grant applications from their regions. Each summary was shared with core staff from the funded states to ensure accuracy and clarity.

Information is listed alphabetically by state. For each state, readers will find a brief abstract or conceptual framework for state systemwide change. Following the abstract is information responding to the following questions:

### **State Basic Information:**

Project Title  
Primary contact person  
Address  
Phone  
Fax  
Email  
Web site  
Date SIG application submitted/submitted  
Beginning date for funding  
Funded Amount  
Who wrote the application

### **State Improvement Strategies:**

1. What special products are planned for development?
2. What interstate cooperatives are planned?
3. What strategies are planned for service delivery?
4. What partnerships are intended?
5. Who are the partners?
6. What type of contracts or subgrants are intended to partners, LEAs, IHEs, PTAs, and others (including lead agency under Part C)?
7. How will resources be pooled with other resources?
8. What specific SIG products, activities, initiatives and strategies are pertinent to Part C (birth to 3, infants, toddlers and their families) services and activities in your state?

States and technical assistance providers are encouraged to download, print, and distribute this document. The document is available in both PDF format (which can be viewed and printed with the free Adobe Acrobat Reader) and in HTML. The PDF version is best used for printing the entire document. The HTML format provides links to the information about individual states from the table of contents. This document is available electronically at <http://drac.org/ficgrec.htm>.

**State Improvement Grantees**

Grantee	Contact	Phone	Grant Award
	2000	Grantees	
Alaska	Karen MacDonald	(907) 463-8723	\$500,000.00
Connecticut	Nancy Stark	(860) 807-2021	\$920,000.00
Illinois	Dr. Cindy Terry, Dr. Gordon Riffel	(312) 782-5389	\$1,500,000.00
Minnesota	Knema Hale	(612) 581-8289	\$1,015,874.00
Montana	Susan Bailey-Anderson	(406) 444-2046	\$550,000.00
Nebraska	Mary Ann Leah	(402) 471-4357	\$575,816.00
North Carolina	E. Lowell Harris	(919) 715-1565	\$1,210,000.00
North Dakota	Mary Rose	(701) 527-3351 ex (701) 528-2272	\$500,000.00
Oklahoma	Margaret Bergal	(405) 521-4876	\$1,034,260.00
	1999	Grantees	
Alabama	Julia Causey	(334) 242-8114	\$1,025,000.00
California	Jane Canning	(916) 327-4217	\$1,800,000.00
Hawaii	Robert Spoden	(808) 956-9199	\$600,000.00
Idaho	Russell Hammond	(208) 332-6919	\$625,000.00
Iowa	Brenda Orr	(319) 281-5735	\$875,000.00
Kansas	Kerry Driggers	(785) 926-3869	\$900,000.00
Kentucky	Ronnie Scott	(502) 564-4970	\$1,000,000.00
Maryland	Lucy Henson	(410) 767-0241	\$1,100,000.00
Massachusetts	Marcia M. Mitrano	(781) 388-5300	\$1,900,000.00
Michigan	Karen Rockhold	(517) 373-9433	\$1,320,000.00
Missouri	Melodie Friedebach	(314) 731-2965	\$1,145,000.00
New Hampshire	Robert Wells	(603) 271-1536	\$1,357,329.00
Ohio	Deborah Gills	(614) 466-2650	\$41,320,000.00
Pennsylvania	Cynthia Packert	(717) 787-6137	\$1,320,000.00
Utah	Lorraine Bass	(801) 535-7700	\$575,000.00
Vermont	Bruce Schreder	(802) 828-3130	\$500,000.00
Virginia	Dennis Lane	(804) 225-2402	\$1,240,000.00

*Summary of Funded State Improvement Grants in 2000*  
*October 2000*

## Alaska

### Abstract of Conceptual Framework for State Systemic Change

The Quality Education in the Last Frontier (QELF) project, Alaska's state improvement grant, is designed to increase educational services and successful outcomes for all students, including students with disabilities. The QELF project will accomplish this by providing direct support and technical assistance, as well as facilitating collaboration among its partners. The project will be located within Alaska's Department of Education & Early Development (DEED), which will provide significant resources for achieving project goals.

Based on an extensive needs assessment, the following six goals were identified:

- Goal 1: Increase the participation of all students, including students with disabilities, in activities related to Alaska's Quality School Initiative and other school reform efforts.
- Goal 2: Support the full participation of parents, families, and community members in activities promoting student achievement.
- Goal 3: Develop and sustain effective partnerships with state agencies that provide services affecting student educational achievement.
- Goal 4: Develop the infrastructure to recruit, train, and retain education professionals.
- Goal 5: Develop the infrastructure to recruit, train, and retain paraprofessionals.
- Goal 6: Develop an evaluation program to assure the efficient use of federal, state, and local resources for project activities.

The QELF project will advocate for full inclusion of students with disabilities in statewide education reform activities by providing training, resources, and technical assistance to school districts, parents, families, communities, and state agencies. The project will also increase cooperation among stakeholders and build the capacity of systemic structures currently in place. Twenty-six organizations representing parents, school districts, school personnel, Alaska Natives and other under-represented groups, state agencies, institutions of higher education, and private employers have signed partnership agreements that identify specific areas of collaboration. These partnerships will enable the QELF project to achieve its goals with a small staff and low administrative overhead. They will also ensure that Alaska's systemic capacity continues to grow after the project's completion.

The QELF project will implement innovative strategies to improve the recruitment, training, and retention of paraprofessionals and professional educational personnel. The Alaska Personnel Development Team, comprised of stakeholders in Alaska's education system, will provide continuous assessment and feedback. The University of Alaska, Anchorage, the University of Oregon, and the Alaska Staff Development Network will combine distance education programs and summer institutes, increase the number and type of courses offered, and share expertise to meet Alaska's preservice and inservice training needs.

The QELF project will enable its partners to be more effective in achieving their goals and ensure federal, state, and local resources are more efficiently integrated. The project will also permanently increase the capacity of Alaska's education system to improve student achievement.

**Alaska**  
**Basic Information**

---

Project Title	Quality Education in the Last Frontier (QELF)
Primary Contact Person	Karen Macdonald
Address	Alaska Department of Education & Early Development Office of Special Education 801 West 10th Juneau, AK 99811-6300
Phone	(907) 465-8723
Fax	(907) 465-2806
Email	Karen.Macdonald@ed.state.ak.us
Web site	<a href="http://www.ed.state.ak.us/oseped/qelpendiment.html">http://www.ed.state.ak.us/oseped/qelpendiment.html</a>
Date AIG Application was Written or Submitted	December 15, 1999
Begin and End Dates for Funding	Aug 2000 - June 2005
Funded Amount:	Approximately \$500,000.00
Who Wrote the Application	Greg Malone, AK SE Staff

**Alaska  
Improvement Strategies**

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**1. What products or activities are planned by the SIG?**

- Goal 1: Increase the participation of all students in activities related to Alaska's Quality Schools Initiative (QSI) and other school reform efforts.
- Goal 2: Support the full participation of parents, families, and community members in activities promoting student achievement.
- Goal 3: Develop and sustain effective partnerships among state agencies that provide services affecting students' educational achievement.
- Goal 4: Develop the infrastructure to recruit, train, and retain education professionals.
- Goal 5: Develop the infrastructure to recruit, train, and retain paraprofessionals.
- Goal 6: Develop evaluation program to ensure efficient use of federal, state, and local resources for project activities.

**2. What interstate connections are planned?**

University of Oregon and other out-of-state HIEs: Implement partnership with University of Oregon and develop partnerships with additional out-of-state institutions that ratio related service providers

Western Regional Resource Center: The WRRC will participate on the Alaska Personnel Development Team and also provide research and technical assistance to the QELP project

**3. What strategies are planned for service delivery?**

- Goal 1: Increase the participation of all students in activities related to Alaska's Quality Schools Initiative (QSI) and other school reform efforts.
  - Objective 1.1: Ensure state data systems track the progress of all students towards meeting state performance standards.
  - Objective 1.2: Provide school districts with training and resources to ensure participation of all students in activities related to Alaska's Quality Schools Initiative (QSI).
  - Objective 1.3: Provide parents and family members with training and resources to support student participation in QSI activities.
- Goal 2: Support the full participation of parents, families, and community members in activities promoting student achievement.
  - Objective 2.1: Increase the capacity of the PTI center to disseminate information and provide technical assistance to families of students with disabilities.
  - Objective 2.2: Increase the participation of parents and families in training education personnel in school districts and institutions of higher education.
  - Objective 2.4: Increase the participation by community members in district activities.

**Goal 3:** Develop and sustain effective partnerships among state agencies that provide services affecting students' educational achievement.

**Objective 3.1:** Collaborate with EED programs to ensure achievement of project goals.

**Objective 3.2:** Collaborate with the Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) program staff.

**Objective 3.3:** Collaborate with the Department of Corrections (DOC) program staff.

**Objective 3.4:** Collaborate with the Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) program staff.

**Goal 4:** Develop the infrastructure to recruit, train, and retain education professionals.

**Objective 4.1:** Increase the capacity of preservice training programs for education professionals.

**Objective 4.2:** Design and implement comprehensive inservice training programs for education professionals.

**Objective 4.3:** Increase efforts to recruit special education teachers.

**Objective 4.4:** Create an effective recruiting program for related service providers.

**Objective 4.5:** Create an effective program to retain special education teachers and related service providers.

**Goal 5:** Develop the infrastructure to recruit, train, and retain paraprofessionals.

**Objective 5.1:** Design a comprehensive training system for paraprofessionals.

**Objective 5.2:** Establish a career ladder for paraprofessionals.

**Objective 5.3:** Increase efforts to recruit paraprofessionals.

**Objective 5.4:** Develop and implement effective retention strategies for paraprofessionals.

**Goal 6:** Develop evaluation program to ensure efficient use of federal, state, and local resources for project activities.

**Objective 6.1:** Effectively administer the project.

**Objective 6.2:** Implement the evaluation plan.

**Objective 6.3:** Disseminate materials and findings to state and national audiences.

#### **4. What partnerships are intended?**

Primary partnerships are with PARENTS, Inc., the Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education, AK and out-of-state IHEs, Department of Education and Early Development, Department of Health and Social Services, Department of Corrections, the Alaska Human Resource Investment Council, and the Alaska Transition Institute.

#### **5. Who are the partners?**

- AK Dept. of Education & Early Development
- University of Alaska, Anchorage
- AK Staff Development Network
- University of Oregon
- PARENTS, Inc.

- Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education
- AK Partnership for Teacher Enhancement (APTE)
- AK Rural Systemic Initiative
- Center for Rural Educator Preparation Partnerships
- Center for Human Development
- AK Teacher Placement
- AK Pacific University
- Sheldon Jackson College
- National Education Association - Alaska
- AK Council of Administrators of Special Education
- AK Human Resources Investment Council
- AK Dept. of Health and Social Services programs, including:
  - Division of Public Health (Section of Maternal, Child & Family Health)
  - Division of Mental Health- Developmental Disabilities
  - Division of Family & Youth Services
  - Division of Juvenile Justice
  - AK Dept. of Corrections
  - AK Dept. of Labor & Workforce Development
  - AK Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
  - AK Council of School Administration
  - AK Association of School Boards
  - Southeast Regional Resource Center
  - AK Mental Health Trust Authority
  - Council for Exceptional Children- Alaska Federation
  - AK Transition Initiative

6. What types of contracts or subgrants are intended to partners, LEAs, IHEs, PTIs and others (including lead agency under Part C)?

Contracts will be in place to:

- Train staff and parents
- Develop a resource guide for parents
- Enhance academic curriculum and instructional techniques to improve student performance
- Disseminate information and provide technical assistance to families
- (With Part C agency) promote preschool transition
- Improve educational services to juvenile Justice Clients
- Improve mental health services to students
- Improve educational services to students served by the Department of Corrections
- Improve secondary transition services
- With AK IHEs to coordinate preservice and inservice training of teachers
- Develop and implement effective premediator programs (including early-intervention provider program)
- Conduct evaluation

**7. How will resources be pooled with other resources?**

The Department of Education and Early Development (EED) will contribute approximately \$100,000 during each year of the project, including time contributed to the project by the State Director of Special Education and EED special education staff. In Project Years 3,4 and 5, EED will begin assuming more responsibility for project staff salaries.

**8. What specific SIG products, activities, initiatives and strategies are pertinent to Part C (birth to 3; infants, toddlers and their families) services and activities in your state?**

- Effective collaboration will enhance and support pre-school transition.
- Children from birth to 3 will be provided paraeducator services
- EED and DHSS Part C will share data

**Connecticut**  
**Abstract or Conceptual Framework for State Systemic Change**

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Two strategic themes have been identified for this grant:

1. Meeting the diverse learning needs of all Connecticut's Infants, Toddlers, Children, and Youth (Birth to 21), including literacy needs.
2. Documenting and addressing current and future personnel shortages via a broad-based systems change effort in higher education.

The themes were identified as a result of an extensive needs assessment process. The Connecticut State Department of Education intends to address these themes through the formation of a statewide partnership team for leadership and through RFPs and incentives that support partnership teams of schools, institutions of higher education, state agencies, community organizations, and parents.

Efforts will focus on ten specific activities:

The first three activities are administrative in nature and focus on establishing:

1. A project officer to administer the grant.
2. A formative and summative charter evaluation process for grant activities.
3. A continuous improvement strategic planning process through the Connecticut State Improvement Partnership Team.

The remaining seven activities describe strategies for addressing one or both of the two strategic themes. Each activity is presented with an expected outcome and indicators for measurement. The specific data to be collected for the formative and summative evaluation component of each activity is presented in the final evaluation section.

The seven activities include:

1. Implementing systems changes in institutions of higher education.
2. Implementing a coordinated data collections system to project Connecticut's education work force pool.
3. Recruiting students into pre-service training to serve low-incidence populations and secondary special education populations, and to increase minority representation in special education and related services programs.
4. Recruiting students into training programs for bilingual speech pathologists.
5. Developing a training program for teachers of students with visual impairment.
6. Coordinating the many initiatives across Connecticut working to encourage and enhance parental involvement.
7. Creating district level model programs to improve children/student outcomes in the areas of literacy, behavior, and transitions.

**Connecticut**  
**Basic Information**

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Project Title	Connecticut State Improvement Grant
Primary Contact Person	Nancy Stark
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Web site	<a href="http://www.state.ct.sde">http://www.state.ct.sde</a>
Date SIG Application Was Written or Submitted	December 15, 1999
Begin and End Dates for Funding	July 1, 2000 to June 20, 2001
Funded Amount	\$920,000.00
Who Wrote the Application	Collaborative effort by staff from the Connecticut State Department of Education, the Special Education Resource Center and the RMC Research Corporation.

**Connecticut  
Improvement Strategies**

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**1. What products or activities are planned by the SIC?**

The following sections describe each of the ten activities which will address the two strategic themes of:

1. Improving system's abilities to meet the needs of diverse learners
2. Reducing personnel shortages in low-incidence disability populations without an increase in representation of minority personnel

Each activity is presented with expected outcomes for the activity as well as indicators to measure progress.

**Activity A: Establish a Project Officer to Administer the Grant Activity**

The project operations coordinator will be employed by the Bureau of Special Education and Pupil Services and housed in the Special Education Resource Center facility.

*Expected Outcome:* Functioning office space is established and occupied by project staff.

*Indicators:* The hiring of staff and purchasing and use of equipment.

**Activity B: Establish a formative and summative cluster evaluation process for the grant activities**

A contract is to be awarded to Gies Martin, Associates of Troy, New York to use a cluster evaluation model to coordinate and implement the multi-site and multi-project evaluation. Basic elements of the cluster model include:

1. Identification of common themes, purposes and outcomes across all projects
2. Technical assistance to the cluster of projects
3. Collaborative data collection
4. Networking conferences that build stakeholder knowledge and skills, facilitate sharing, promote connections with other staff and experts in the field, and provide access to and information about resources

*Expected Outcome:* Formative and summative evaluations of the funded projects, increased skills and knowledge of personnel implementing RPP and connected projects.

*Indicators:* Filing of reports, provision of technical assistance, and high quality evaluation.

**Activity C: Institute a continuous improvement strategy planning process by the State Improvement Plan Partnership Team.**

The Connecticut State Improvement Plan Partnership Team (CSIPPT) will engage in a strategic planning process to ensure continuous improvement in the state. The Team will use quarterly meetings and telecommunications to review the progress of the State Improvement Plan and State Improvement Grant activities for both Part B and Part C of IDEA '97 in conjunction with other information regarding the status of services to individuals with disabilities in the state.

*Expected Outcomes:* The CSIPPT will serve as a model collaborative partnership to ensure continuous improvement by monitoring activities under the current SIP/SIG as well as by planning future coordinated projects. Efforts will be coordinated with OSEPs continuous improvement activities, as appropriate.

*Indicators:* Demonstrated linkages between team recommendations, implementation of program activities and attainment of goals, meeting criteria similar to the criteria for the Malcolm Baldrige award; enhanced connections across federal programs within the Connecticut State Department of Education and across other state agencies; initiation of efforts outside or beyond this particular grant; and maintenance and expansion of membership.

**Activity 11: Implement Systems Change initiatives in Institutions of Higher Education**

RFP's will be developed to award two (2) competitive grants to Connecticut Institutions of Higher Education. The grants will serve to fund systems change projects to prepare all teachers to teach in a unified educational system, in classroom settings with diverse learners and diverse learning needs. Curriculum, instructional methods, practices and student teaching experience, as well as the organizational structures of the institution, will all be addressed. Projects must include the blending of regular and special education curriculum, methods, strategies to match instruction to learners needs; modeling of team teaching and co-teaching; close co-site work with school districts, collaboration across the college and university departments engaged in teacher preparation, involvement of families, community organizations, state agencies and local agencies as partners, and training content area (IE faculty (e.g., mathematics, science and social studies) in special education and literacy strategies that can be integrated into the curriculum).

*Expected Outcomes:* Expected outcomes include the preparation of educational staff at the pre-service level to meet diverse learning needs; the expansion of higher education faculty who will have a knowledge of research-based reading strategies; the adequate preparation of teachers who will enter the field with the skills needed to identify and remediate reading problems at the earliest possible time; and a model of early identification and early intervention to prevent increased learning problems due to lack of appropriate reading instruction.

*Indicators:* Changes in Connecticut's certification that will move toward a more unified system; discernable changes in the planning, structure and delivery of instruction in Institutions of Higher Education; change in referral and identification rates of children with disabilities across Connecticut.

**Activity 12: To implement a data collection system to project Connecticut's educational work force pool.**

An RFP will be developed to design a well-coordinated data collection system which will be used to identify the potential pool for future candidates for school district related service providers, special education teachers of low-incidence populations and secondary special education teachers.

*Expected Outcome:* A coordinated data system will be in place that will accurately project the future pool of qualified candidates, and assist in the planning of recruitment strategies and in increasing the capacity of BIEs to meet the needs of Connecticut's children with disabilities.

*Indicators:* Agency collaboration, data maintenance, and data accessibility.

**Activity F:** Recruit students into pre-service training programs to serve low-incidence population and secondary education populations, and to increase minority representation in special education and related service programs

Grants will be offered to an BIE to recruit 30 students into training programs for areas of critical need. These incentives will also serve to increase minority representation in special education and related services training programs. The grants, managed by BIE, will be available to assist with tuition and related costs of enrollment.

*Expected Outcome:* Increased diversity of Connecticut's educational work force, as well as an adequate supply of appropriately trained qualified candidates

*Indicators:* Lack of shortages in the secondary special education, low-incidence populations, and increase in minority representation.

**Activity G:** Recruit students into training programs for bilingual speech pathologists

A contract will be awarded to Southern Connecticut State University to contribute to the tuition and other related costs for six graduate students.

*Expected Outcome:* Speech pathologists will be available who are qualified to provide services to bilingual children.

*Indicators:* Enrollment in the program, graduation from the program, and employment rates of bilingual speech pathologists.

**Activity 11:** Develop a training program for teachers and students with visual impairments

An RFP will be used to fund an IIE to develop a training program to prepare teachers of students with visual impairments in collaboration with a regional or nationally recognized teacher preparation program.

*Expected Outcome:* Teachers for students with visual impairments are available and a training program exists which is easily accessible in a neighboring state.

*Indicators:* Enrollment, graduation rates, and sufficient numbers of teachers for students with visually impairments

**Activity 12:** Coordinate all initiatives across Connecticut working to encourage and enhance parental involvement

A contract will be awarded to the Commissioner's Parent Advocacy Center (CPAC) to examine all the parent initiatives in the state. CPAC will coordinate efforts with the Bureau of Early Childhood Education and Social Services, the Bureau of School, Family, Community Partnerships and the Bureau of Adult Education, and the Bureau of Mental Retardation's Part C Program to identify effective parent programs and to identify areas of need. Emphasis will be on initiatives to support the parents of children at risk of school failure and children with disabilities birth through 21. Subsequent RFPs will be issued to fund initiatives in gaps identified by CPAC.

*Expected Outcome:* The number of parents actively participating in their child's educational programs will increase; there will be an improved quality of early intervention/educational programs to address children's needs; and the quality of USPs and ISPs will improve.

*Indicators:* Increased parental participation, satisfaction, and effectiveness of initiatives.

**Activity 13:** Create model program development projects in the LEAs around critical issues to improve children/student outcomes

An RFP process will be used to award 8-10 competitive grants per year to LEAs to develop model programs to improve children/student outcomes in the areas of literacy, behavior, and transitions from both Connecticut's birth to 3 system to school and from secondary school to post-secondary situations. LEAs must identify a team of partners to include institutions of higher education (IHE), community organizations, and parents; provide a written presentation of the model to be utilized for dissemination and replication; and use state-of-the-art technology in their projects.

*Expected Outcome:* Improved educational systems to address children/students' needs in natural environments and general education settings; and increased success in promoting the learning, growth, and development of students.

*Indicators:* Collaborative quality of model programs, skills and knowledge gained by participants, demonstrable results, and indicators of student success

**2. What interstate connections are planned?**

Though there are currently no specific interstate connections planned in the SIG, the contract with Glen Martin, Associates in Troy, New York, as well as the intention to involve neighboring state(s) in the participation of the development of a regional training program for teachers of the visually impaired should be noted.

**3. What strategies are planned for service delivery?**

Please see question 1.

**4. What partnerships are intended?**

The development of collaborative partnership is emphasized throughout the State Improvement Grant. The establishment of a state-wide partnership team (CSIPPT) to guide and direct the continuous improvement strategic planning process reflects the state leadership strategy. Other activities include partnerships to be developed through RFPs that provide incentives to local education agencies, institutions of higher education, state agencies, and community and parent organizations.

Specific contracted services include:

- Glen Martin, Associates - money to fund formative and summative cluster evaluation of projects and sub-projects.
- A grant to the Connecticut Parents Advocacy Center -to conduct an assessment and disseminate results of 2-3 grants involving parents, literacy and advocacy
- A grant to the Southern Connecticut State University to recruit students into training programs for bilingual speech pathologists.
- A grant to the Special Education Resource Center to fund training, on-going technical assistance and materials support

In addition, the specifics of contracts or grants are mentioned for the following purposes

- To establish a teacher training program for visual impairments
- To 2 LEAs for the purpose of funding system change to meet the diverse needs of learners in a unified educational system.
- 8-10 grants to LEAs for the purpose of engaging in action research with partnership teams

**5. Who are the partners?**

Please see question 4.

**6. What types of contracts or subgrants are intended to partners, LEAs, Hubs, PTAs and others (including lead agency under Part C)?**

Please see question 4.

**7. How will resources be pooled with other resources?**

This Connecticut State Improvement Grant is the direct result of significant earlier work involved in the development of the Connecticut State Department of Education's *Connecticut Agenda*. The *Connecticut Agenda* set forth a positive statement on educating students with disabilities, priorities of good practice, and goals and objectives with accompanying strategies. The development of the Connecticut State Improvement Plan was tied directly to the *Connecticut Agenda* and the Connecticut State Improvement Grant speaks to aspects of the Connecticut State Improvement Plan. Therefore, every effort has been made to coordinate initiatives and to pool resources related to these initiatives. "This has afforded continued momentum and commitment critical in effective and meaningful systemic changes, rather than the perception of 'Yet another improvement'."

**8. What specific SIG products, activities, initiatives and strategies are pertinent to Part C (birth to 3, infants, toddlers and their families) services and activities in your state?**

Specific mention of strategies or initiatives pertinent to Part C.

Part C is specifically mentioned in the areas of enhancing parental involvement and in implementing system change initiatives in two institutions of higher education and in the development of district model programs. The latter two specify that an expected outcome will be a model of early identification/early intervention developed and disseminated across Connecticut to prevent increased learning problems due to lack of appropriate reading instruction or early reading problems.

## **Illinois**

### **Abstract or Conceptual Framework for State Systemic Change**

Illinois is committed to improved performance for all students. This grant proposal is dedicated to improving success for Illinois children and youth with disabilities. It represents a partnership among the Illinois State Board of Education, public school entities, parent and professional organizations, and higher education, with the ultimate aim being student success.

School improvement, standards-based learning, and teacher quality are all critical components for Illinois student achievement. School improvement plans are an ongoing requirement for Illinois schools. The *Illinois Learning Standards*, applicable to all students, were adopted in 1997. The Illinois teacher certification system has changed recently so that new laws require significant reform in the way teachers are initially prepared and continuing professional development occurs. Concurrently, school administrators face critical shortages of special education teachers and related services personnel and have many staff with temporary approvals.

Illinois does not have an adequate supply of appropriately trained special education personnel able to assess improved needs for students with disabilities, nor staff sufficiently prepared to work collaboratively with personnel in general education. There are geographic pockets of severe shortages. There is not a coordinated system of professional development accountable to the Illinois State Board of Education. Stopgap measures have worked in part, but have been insufficient.

Illinois needs a systemic change in the professional development of current and future special education personnel in order to achieve student success. The Illinois State Improvement Grant, Staff for Student Success is the lever to achieve the necessary systemic change.

**Illinois**  
**Basic Information**

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<b>Project Title</b>	Illinois State Improvement Grant: Staff for Student Success
<b>Primary Contact Person</b>	Dr. Cindy Terry, Operational Functions of SIG Dr. Gordon Riffel, Oversight Functions of SIG
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<b>Web site</b>	<a href="http://www.isbe.net/spec-ed/">http://www.isbe.net/spec-ed/</a>
<b>Date SIG Application was Written or Submitted</b>	December 15, 1999
<b>Begin and End Dates for Funding</b>	July 01, 2000 to December 31, 2005
<b>Funded Amount</b>	\$1,500,000.00
<b>Who Wrote the Application</b>	Dr. Gail Lieberman

## Bills Improvement Strategies

**Goal 1:** To increase the number of appropriately trained and credentialed special education and related services personnel, meeting student needs and addressing identified geographic areas of shortages (Educator Academies)

**Objective 1.1:** To provide funding that will facilitate development of local systems of personnel recruitment and training to meet student needs and address identified shortages

**Objective 1.2:** To develop a state-level infrastructure to address personnel shortages and enhance long-term capacity for minimizing and/or eliminating shortages

### 3. What products or activities are planned by the SIE?

#### Activities Related to Goal 1 and Objectives 1.1 & 1.2

3.1.1 Develop and implement Educator Academies through a competitive Request for Proposals (RFP) seeking implementation strategies for local/regional systemic change that will encourage personnel to prepare for careers in special education, including individuals who are culturally and linguistically diverse and individuals with disabilities (with appropriate consultation from parents, administrators, and higher education). *Project Coordinator; RFP developed by May 2000, then revised and issued annually.*

3.1.2 Disseminate RFP, receive, rate, and rank proposals; and award contracts to support Educator Academies for implementation strategies for systemic change. *Project Coordinator; by June 2000, then revised and issued annually.*

3.1.3 Share implementation strategies with appropriate stakeholders. *Project Coordinator, special education joint agreement, and PTGs; by December 2000, then annually.*

3.1.4 Provide technical assistance to all contract recipients. *Project Coordinator, ongoing.*

3.1.5 Support completion of implementation strategies by contract recipients. *Project Coordinator, annual.*

3.1.6 Seek and analyze evaluation information regarding implementation of strategies for local systems of personnel recruitment and training. *Project Evaluate; by 2001, then annually.*

3.1.7 Build and maintain an ISBE database to provide a validated, comprehensive, current knowledge base on effective recruitment and retention strategies that will serve as the foundation of a special education personnel clearinghouse. *Project Coordinator and ISBE staff; May 2000-December 2003.*

3.1.8 Develop and use partnerships with professional organizations to recruit needed personnel, particularly individuals from traditionally underrepresented groups. *Project Coordinator and ISBE staff; May 2000-December 2003.*

3.1.9 Collaborate within ISBE to develop and implement a standardized special education credentialing system. *Project Coordinator and ISBE staff; May 2000-December 2003.*

**Goal 2:** To provide a network of professional development that coordinates local, regional and state resources to parents and educators who share responsibility for implementing an

integrated service delivery model focused on improving outcomes for children and youth with disabilities.

- Objective 2.1:** To provide a systematic service delivery system of professional development through development and implementation of regional plans that follow a common format and set of criteria established at the state level and are prepared in conjunction with educators, parents, and community partners.
- Objective 2.2:** To establish annual statewide IHE faculty institutes that will provide all higher education faculty in the field of education or related disciplines with cutting-edge information, policies, practices, knowledge, and skills.
- Objective 2.3:** To develop and implement a "trainer-of-trainers" model for providing a series of local "town meetings" on quality education for individuals with disabilities.
- Objective 2.4:** To establish an annual PTC "drive around" conference to ensure annual dissemination of state-of-the-art information on improving outcomes for children and youth with disabilities.

**Activities Related to Goal 2 and Objectives 2.1, 2.2, 2.3 & 2.4**

- 2.1.1 Develop and implement regional Professional Development Academies and expand over time, as locally needed, based on an RFP. *Project Coordinator, CSPD Advisory Committee, and PTCs; RFP developed by May 2000; contractor awarded by July 2000.*
- 2.1.2 Provide training through Professional Development Academies for participants to gain knowledge and skills in the characteristics, capabilities and needs of children and youth with disabilities; appropriate and varied instructional strategies, and development and implementation of quality IEPs. *Project Coordinator, CSPD Advisory Committee, and PTCs; July 2000-December 2003.*
- 2.1.3 Integrate the service delivery system with other Illinois and ISBE systems regarding continuing professional development in order to assure a seamless system. *School districts, special education joint agreements, and parents; July 2000-December 2003.*
- 2.1.4 Provide for continuous improvement of regional plan development and implementation through a feedback loop with educators, parents, and community partners, and with information from the special education personnel clearinghouse. (*See activity 2.2.1 Project Coordinator; July 2000-December 2003.*)
- 2.2.1 Develop specifications and negotiate contracts with one or more lead colleges and universities to administer funds and coordinate activities for the IHE faculty institutes, requiring that parents serve as co-trainers. *Project Coordinator, university representatives, and parents; Summer 2000, then annually.*
- 2.2.2 Integrate knowledge and skills built at the local and regional levels through the Professional Development Academies into the IHE faculty institutes regarding best practices in education, research to practice, and information about improving results for individuals with disabilities, using school-based teams as presenters. *Project Coordinator, annually.*
- 2.2.3 Prepare and disseminate information from the annual IHE faculty institutes to local school districts, special education joint agreements, education service centers, and PTCs across Illinois. *Project Coordinator; annually in August, 2001-2005.*

1.3.1 Work across Illinois to develop school-based, cross-disciplinary teams of parents/education agency personnel to participate in the model. *Project Coordinator, CSPO Advisory Committee, special education joint agreements, and parents, September 2000; December 2003.*

1.3.2 Train school-based, cross-disciplinary teams appropriately in terms of content and process on issues relating to quality education for infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities, e.g., standards, assessment, alternative assessment, problem-solving, behavior management, emotional building, group dynamics, etc. *Project Coordinator; Winter 2000*

1.3.3 Replicate the training with other school-based, cross-disciplinary teams state-wide. *Original team members from 1.3.1; Spring 2001.*

1.3.4 Use the state-trained teams to conduct quarterly, intensive "town meetings" locally for parents, educators, and community partners. *Original team members from 2.3.1; Spring 2001, then quarterly.*

1.4.1 Develop and issue RFP and negotiate contracts with the PTICs to collaboratively implement annual "drive around" conferences. *Project Coordinator and PTICs; May-July 2000, then annually via RFP and award contracts.*

1.4.2 Review and approve priorities and conference materials, and provide technical assistance to PTICs. *Project Coordinator and PTICs; by July 2000, then annually.*

1.4.3 Evaluate the effectiveness of this model of professional development delivery and modify as needed. *Project Evaluator, Project Coordinator, and PTICs; ongoing.*

**2. What interstate connections are planned?**

None

**3. What strategies are planned for service delivery?**

Educator Academies, personnel preparation programs, are planned to alleviate teacher shortages in special education. Professional Development Academies will direct activities toward special education. The Regular Education Initiative (REI), a model previously exist in Illinois, will be used for the Professional Development Academies to assist local collaborative efforts to achieve high-quality professional development. In this trainer-of-trainers model, cross-discipline teams attend training and then replicate it with other entities. The REI model has fostered local capacity building on topics of greatest need for individual buildings or at the district level. One statewide objective of Goal 3, but with three implications for addressing Goal 1 as well, will be to plan and support annual HIE faculty institutes. Annual HIE faculty institutes are designed to retool HIE faculty with respect to training general and special education personnel for roles in inclusive classrooms and schools, and with respect to providing the kinds of alternative formats (e.g., distance education) that will be needed to meet local needs for additional personnel. The annual interdisciplinary HIE faculty institutes will provide faculty from all colleges and universities ongoing access to new and innovative research-based practices in the field. Special and general education faculty from colleges and universities, as well as from other related areas, such as educational administration and educational psychology, will be encouraged to attend in cross-discipline teams. Networking provided through these institutes is also critical as buildings begin to share expertise and resources on an ongoing basis. This activity, like those at the local

level, will be based on collaboration among entities concerned with the knowledge and skill of faculty who prepare special education personnel, including the PTICs, the Illinois Teacher Education Division of the Illinois Council for Exceptional Children (ICEC), the Human Resource Committee of the Interagency Council on Early Intervention, and the professional development arms of related professional organizations. Local "town meetings" are viewed as a primary source of information for designing local personnel preparation and development initiatives that will have an impact on both goals. These local "town meetings" will provide parents and professionals with a forum to openly discuss special education support for students and will give parents an active voice in defining the qualities of the personnel who work with their children. The local "town meetings" will engage parents and professionals as equal partners and will encourage greater participation by parents from diverse backgrounds. Local "town meetings" are anticipated to be highly sustainable approaches to community involvement at the end of the grant period.

The final statewide objective of Goal 2 is to establish and conduct annual "drive arounds." Past collaboration between ISBE and the four PTICs resulted in a highly successful two-day "drive around" on IDEIA '97, with a special emphasis on discipline and multicultural awareness. The idea behind the "drive around" conference is to simultaneously blanket different areas of the state with the same state-of-the-art information within a short period of time and to provide an accessible opportunity for hundreds of parents to participate with professionals in learning important new information. Through the efforts of the PTICs, the IDEIA '97 "drive around" was successful in involving parents of diverse cultural backgrounds, many of whom had limited English-speaking ability.

#### 4. What partnerships are intended?

Goal 1 will be achieved through successful implementation of Educator Academies personnel preparation programs to be located in geographic areas that have documented, substantial shortages of personnel. The Educator Academies will be linked to a special education joint agreement or school district, but will include broad collaboration with colleges and universities, other education entities (e.g., other districts and Regional Offices of Education), other partners, such as the early intervention system, other agencies that work with the same population, parents, Parent Training and Information Centers (PTICs), and the business community. This high level of collaboration will be encouraged through the selection criteria used for funding. The Educator Academies will also be linked to the recently revised Illinois procedures for certificate renewal, which require continuing professional development. Such coordination would allow individuals who already hold a certificate and are interested in earning either a special education certificate or a different special certificate to incorporate coursework for that purpose into their professional development plans.

Goal 2 will be achieved using a similar process and structure, through successful implementation of Professional Development Academies that provide professional development activities directed toward the vision of special education outlined in this proposal, in reform efforts, and in IDEIA '97, for students with disabilities. As in Goal 1, it is expected that these collaboratives will be composed of multiple partners, including parents, with an interest in the quality of schools and the future work force.

Collaboration will be encouraged among entities concerned with the knowledge and skill of faculty who prepare special education personnel, including the PTICs, the Illinois Teacher Education Division of the Illinois Council for Exceptional Children (ICEC), the Human Resource Committee of the Interagency Council on Early Intervention, and the professional development arms of related professional organizations.

The State Advisory Council is a partner with ISBE through their advice on the education of students with disabilities. The State Advisory Council reviewed and offered recommendations during the development of this proposal and will continue to advise on State Improvement Grant implementation activities.

The Illinois State Curriculum Center (ISCC) is located on the University of Illinois at Springfield campus. It has a 28-year record of providing expertise in technical assistance to educators throughout Illinois and the nation, with particular emphasis on training conference delivery in a variety of disciplines; information clearinghouse functions and professional development for local teachers, counselors and administrators. ISCC is currently under contract with ISBE to provide a statewide transfer-of-practices model on the changes inherent from IDEA '97 regarding implementation of IEPs. ISCC staff also assisted in developing this proposal. The Assistive Technology Exchange Network (ATEN), a partnership of ISBE and the United Cerebral Palsy Association of Greater Chicago and associated with the national Cisma Foundation, was initially funded through ISBE with IDEA, Part B, funds. ATEN offers access to assistive technology services and services and provides a statewide database of available assistive technology equipment, online database search capability, facilitation of equipment exchange, assistive technology information, and technical support. ATEN will be part of the content available for the Professional Development Academies.

**5. Who are the partners?**

Please refer to question 4

**6. What types of contracts or subgrants are intended to partners, LEAs, IHEs, PTIs and others (including lead agency under Part C)?**

To ensure that the proposed personnel preparation and professional development activities are effectively implemented, the majority of the budget is allocated to funding grants and contracts to public education entities, Illinois Institute of Higher Education, and Parent Training and Information Centers. Such funding is designed to support efforts toward a comprehensive statewide system of personnel preparation and personnel development. Educator Academies and Professional Development Academies will be established through subgrants with local, regional and statewide school districts or other entities. Through the SIG, the project coordinator will develop a competitive Request for Proposals (RFP) seeking implementation of strategies for local regional systemic change that will encourage personnel preparation for careers in special education. Once developed, the project coordinator will disseminate RFPs, receive, rate and rank proposals and award contracts that will support systemic change. Professional Academies will be developed and implemented regionally and expanded over time and as the need arises locally, based on RFP. The qualifications required of consultants and subcontractors are directly

linked to the specific requirements of the appropriate activity to be addressed. Eligible applicants for grants to support the Educator and Professional Development activities will be awarded only to special education joint agreement/local school districts. In each case, applicants will be expected to demonstrate that they have met the educational and other criteria specified in the relevant RFP. Similarly, entities receiving contracts or subgrants under these goals must show that they can meet all outlined specifications. Additional entities targeted for contracts are PTICs and DEAs. In addition to the qualifications that relate to their current roles in the educational system, PTICs and DEAs must also agree to collect the required evaluation information. An evaluation for the State Improvement Grant will be sought through an RFP process, and will be selected based on professional qualifications and the quality of the proposal in relation to the stated goals and anticipated outcomes of the State Improvement Grant.

3. How will resources be pooled with other resources?

STARNET (Support and Technical Assistance Regionally) This is a statewide training and technical assistance initiative for early childhood special education supported by ESEA, Part B, preschool discretionary funding. Recipients of STARNET training and technical assistance have included parents, early childhood special education teachers, early intervention providers, paraprofessionals, related service personnel, parents, and administrators. STARNET conducts ongoing needs assessment and responds to individual, local, and regional concerns using current best-practice and research-based information. These data reveal highest interest in the topics of:

- Child growth and development
- Family systems/parenting
- Prevention of child abuse
- Transition from early intervention to early childhood special education
- Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP/IEP) development
- Autism/pervasive developmental delay
- Special education regulations and other legal issues
- Assessment

DHS continues to fund STARNET but now in collaboration with the Illinois Department of Human Services (DHS) formerly intervention training and technical assistance. Since the transfer in 1998-99 of early intervention lead agency responsibility from ISBE to DHS, 1,490 practitioners have been enrolled by DHS as early intervention providers. Many of these providers have no training specific to early intervention family-centered services. As lead agency for Part C, ISBE had funded the early intervention training and credentialing project called Provider Connections. DHS will continue the implementation and funding of this project as a cooperative venture with ISBE. In addition to STARNET, DHS and ISBE provide funding for and implement the Child Find Project as partners. Child Find provides training and technical assistance to early intervention and school district personnel on child find and early childhood transition activities and responsibilities. The combined effort of all of these projects that target early intervention and early childhood special education will serve to enhance the regional professional development to be provided through this grant.

Conclusion: ISBE Strategic Commitments

The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) vision of standards-led excellence for every learner is supported by strategic commitments stated in its Leadership Agenda for 1997-2000. These commitments include:

- Implement and institutionalize the Illinois Learning Standards as the foundation for educational excellence in Illinois.
- Ensure that all students at risk of academic failure are able to meet the Illinois Learning Standards.
- Support early childhood education so that all children develop a strong foundation for learning.
- Ensure that school infrastructure and the learning environment are safe and supportive for student learning.
- Develop linkages with higher education to create an integrated system of educational opportunities that serve the needs of learners of all ages, with particular emphasis on students in preschool through college.

The clear intent of these commitments is to provide all students with appropriate learning environments, regardless of gender, race, national origin, color, disability, or age. The activities to be supported by the State Improvement Grant are designed with the broad array of diversity issues in mind, with the most immediate purpose being to provide students with disabilities the support and services necessary for improved results. Toward that end, the project will concentrate on increasing the availability and quality of services and identifying the personnel needed to monitor and support students with disabilities in the general curriculum and general education settings.

8. What specific SIG products, activities, initiatives and strategies are pertinent to Part C (birth to 3, infants, toddlers and their families) services and activities in your state?

STARNET (Support and Technical Assistance Regionally).<sup>1</sup> This is a statewide training and technical assistance initiative for early childhood special education supported by IDEA, Part B, preschool discretionary funding. Recipients of STARNET training and technical assistance have included parents, early childhood special education teachers, early intervention providers, paraprofessionals, related service personnel, parapro, and administrators.

STARNET conducts ongoing needs assessment and responds to individual, local, and regional concerns using current best-practices and research-based information. Those data reveal highest interest in the topics of: child growth and development; family systems/parenting; prevention of child abuse; transition from early intervention to early childhood special education; Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP)/IEP development; non-environmental development delay; special education regulations and other legal issues; and assessment.

ISBE continues to fund STARNET but new activities are in collaboration with the Illinois Department of Human Services (DHS) for early intervention and technical assistance. Since the transfer in 1998-99 of early intervention lead agency responsibility from ISBE to DHS, 1,490 practitioners have been enrolled by DHS as early intervention providers. Many of these providers have no training specific to early intervention family-centered services. As lead agency for Part C, ISBE had funded the early intervention training and credentialing project called

Provider Connections. DHS will consider the implementation and funding of this project as a cooperative venture with ISBE.

In addition to STARNet, DHS and ISBE provide funding for and implement the Child Find Project as partners. Child Find provides training and technical assistance to early intervention and school district personnel on child find and early childhood transition activities and responsibilities. The combined effort of all these projects targeting early intervention and early childhood special education serves to enhance the regional professional development to be provided.

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**Minnesota**  
**Abstract or Conceptual Framework for State Systemic Change**

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**Minnesota Statewide Systems Change Alliance in Special Education**

The Minnesota Statewide Systems Change Alliance (the Alliance) represents a collaborative partnership of parents, state and local education agencies, institutions of higher education, community service providers, and other organizations committed to implementing initiatives that will lead to measurable changes in the statewide system of special education. The goal of this effort is to create a comprehensive, integrated service delivery system of highly skilled personnel who can work together, along with parents, to ensure that students with disabilities are provided full access to general education programs. To accomplish this goal, the Alliance will conduct professional development and related activities aimed at impacting Minnesota's general and special education systems. They will also engage a wide range of community partners in these efforts with the goal of creating an educational system that effectively serves all students. The Alliance is seeking to produce and support improvements that result in permanent, systemic change. To achieve this goal, the Minnesota Statewide Systems Change Alliance will oversee the implementation of a comprehensive improvement plan that is based on an extensive analysis of local needs within the state.

A model has been adopted that will help guide Alliance activities. This model is based on information obtained from statewide needs assessments as well as strategic goals identified by parent and professional groups. The model also reflects priorities articulated through Minnesota's Statewide System Goals and the Learning Performance Goals, established by the Division of Special Education. With the development of a comprehensive service system serving as the primary mission, the model consists of three main goal areas:

1. Facilitating Access to General Education Curriculum and Achieving Results
2. Implementing a Coordinated, Multidisciplinary Intergency Service System
3. Ensuring the Availability of a Qualified Special Education Workforce.

These three areas represent the general framework from which all professional development and dissemination initiatives have been designed and will be implemented for the SISG. In all cases, the activities described within each goal area will be aligned with statewide reform efforts and initiatives designed to address the needs of Minnesota's increasingly diverse student population.

The Minnesota Department of Children, Families, and Learning (DCF), Division of Special Education, will provide leadership and overall management of contractual and non-contractual partners. The Division of Special Education will be involved in this process by an Alliance steering committee, a group comprised of key stakeholders representing parents and various educational and advocacy groups within Minnesota. The committee will provide feedback to staff conducting project activities and participate in systems change evaluations and continuous improvement activities.

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**Minnesota**  
**Basic Information**

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Date SIG Application was Written or Submitted	December 15, 1999
Begin and End Dates for Funding	July 2000 to June 2005
Funded Amount	\$1,013,816.00
Who Wrote the Application	Norma Hale

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**Minnesota  
Improvement Strategies**

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Personnel on the SIG grant are called the Alliance throughout the proposal.

- The three goals of the Minnesota SIG are:
- Goal 1:** Facilitate access to general education curriculum and achieve results for children and youth with disabilities
  - Goal 2:** Fully implement a coordinated, multidisciplinary emergency service system for children and youth with disabilities birth through 21 statewide.
  - Goal 3:** Ensure the availability of a qualified special education workforce in all regions and communities of Minnesota

**1. What products or activities are planned by the SIG?**

- Goal 1:** Facilitate access to general education curriculum and achieve results for children and youth with disabilities

- Objective 1.1:** Promote collaboration between general and special education staff to increase access to general education programs and participation in statewide reforms for students with disabilities.

**Activities and Outcomes related to Goal 1 and Objective 1.1**

- 1.1.1.** Train a cadre of CAPS (Collaborating to Accommodate Performance Standards) mentors capable of providing ongoing staff development to increase collaboration between general and special education within the state.

*Outcome(s): By the end of year 3, 50-60 Minnesota education staff will have the skills to serve as CAPS trainers to conduct local and regional training for general and special education*

- 1.1.2.** Implement CAPS training for 20-25 regular and special education teacher teams (8 staff per team) per year for each of Years 1-5 to promote access to general education programs for students with disabilities.

*Outcome(s): By the end of Year 5, approximately 1,600-1,800 general education teachers will have received CAPS training in 11 Minnesota Special Education Regions. An analysis will be made of pre and post IEPs to assess the extent to which CAPS training had been successful in increasing access to general education programs. Also by the end of Year 3, member institutions of the Higher Education Forum will offer CAPS training in their pre-service program either as part of the required instructional program or as an elective workshop or training.*

- 1.1.3.** Implement specific training opportunities for special education teachers and related services personnel to incorporate Minnesota Graduation Standards in Student IEPs and Individual Emergency Plans (IEPs)

*Outcome(s): By the end of Year 3, training modules will be developed that outline a process of including Minnesota Graduation Standards on IEPs or Individual Emergency Plans (IEPs)*

*Note: By the end of Year 3, all of Minnesota's 2,400 K-12 special education students will receive space in at least one of the three existing stations through Interim, Televised, Telecast, or T33 technological. This document will be updated as needed to reflect new funding and to update any changes or modifications in legislation or state policies related to Minnesota's Continuation Standards.*

**1.1.4 Include CAPS general and special education training materials and strategies in pre-service training programs in MDE through Minnesota's participating universities, collaborations, partnerships, and associations that support the inclusion of students with disabilities in Minnesota Continuation Standards.**

*Outcome: By the end of Year 3, all local, state, and the Higher Education Forum in implemented pre-service teacher training initiatives in a minimum of eight locations in Year 3. By Year 5, ensure teacher training initiatives at the state will offer a focus on specialty-specific that includes CAPS content and strategies.*

**1.1.5 Conduct training and information dissemination activities to build the capacity of families, schools, and communities to support students with emotional and behavioral disorders in general education programs.**

**Activities and Outcomes related to Goal 1 and Objective 1.2**

**1.2.1 Develop and conduct training activities in the implementation of a school and community change model that addresses the needs of students with EBD.**

*Outcome: By the end of Year 2, a training manual describing components of a school and community based model will be developed. By Year 3, training will have occurred in at least four regions with the remaining regions receiving training in Year 4. After, By Year 5 all collaborations within Minnesota will have implemented the model.*

**1.2.2 Increase knowledge and awareness of children's mental health needs among school staff, administrators, and state agency staff to promote inclusion of students with emotional and behavioral disorders in general education programs.**

*Outcome: By the end of Year 3, an agency training package will be developed and disseminated to all Minnesota districts, including Charter schools and concurrent diplomas, disseminating to all community districts, including Charter schools and concurrent diplomas.*

**1.2.3 Continue staff development activities to increase the number of students with EBD.**

*Outcome: By the end of Year 1, key components of Individualized Emergency Plans (IEPs) will be developed. By the end of Year 2, an agreement with the State Emergency Committee will be revised and information will be disseminated via the Allstate website and brochure with the completed in less than 4 days in Minnesota. Also, by the end of Year 3, all revisions, agreements will be using Individualized Emergency Plans for students with emotional and behavioral disorders.*

**1.2.4 Conduct information dissemination activities in response services for families with EBD by examining the quality and effectiveness of available programs.**

*Outcome: A manual will be developed by the end of Year 2 that provides information about quality/efficacy of programs that serve families with EBD. By the end of Year 3, effective*

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*components of a service delivery model for females with EBD will be piloted in 5 schools. By Year 3, Alliance staff will disseminate information to all schools within Minnesota regarding effective models of services for females with EBD.*

**Objective 1.3** Conduct staff development training on the integration of assistive and educational technology into special and general education programs

*Activities and Outcomes related to Goal 1 and Objective 1.3*

**1.3.1** Expand technical assistance and information dissemination and networking opportunities for education and interagency staff to provide students with sensitive technology devices and services to promote access to general education programs

*Outcomes(s): Five meetings will be held with the Statewide Technology Committee Years 1-3. Approximately 1,700 educators and interagency staff will participate at the statewide technology conference meetings. Years 1-3, 30% will represent general education and interagency staff. By the end of Year 3, all education organizations and professional groups in Minnesota will have access to a website with continuously updated information on technology policies and practices.*

**1.3.2** Conduct information dissemination activities regarding assistive technology planning that addresses the needs of local education agency staff to increase student opportunities for participation in general education programs

*Outcomes(s): By the end of Year 1, the Statewide Assistive Technology Committee will publish and disseminate the updated and revised version of *Assistive Technology for Students With Disabilities: Guidelines for Department and Services* and will have created the website. Also, by the end of Year 3, state technology plans will address the needs of students with disabilities.*

**1.3.3** Conduct training with special and regular education staff to integrate assistive and educational technology in general education programs through the implementation of a five-phase training model

*Outcomes(s): By the end of Year 3, Phases I through IV training will be completed where 50 educators will have completed certification and a statewide leadership team will be formed to provide ongoing and continuous training to local agencies within Minnesota's Special Education Regions.*

**Objective 1.4** Conduct staff development activities that provide general education administrators (e.g., principals, superintendents) with the leadership, knowledge, and skills necessary to promote access to general education programs for students with disabilities

**Activities and Outcomes related to Goal 3 and Objective 1.4**

*Outcome(s): By the end of Year 1 a joint committee of Minnesota Staff and Minnesota Administrators of Special Education (MASSE) and the Minnesota Association of School Administrators (MASA) members will be formed and training materials to address needs will be developed. By Year 3, all currently licensed school administrators will have attended at least one of the annual training sessions held each Minnesota Region. Also, by the end of Year 3 formative program evaluation activities will show that school administrators perceived training activities had raised their knowledge and skills in need areas that it had an impact on the manner in which they carried out their administrative roles.*

**1.4.2 Create partnerships with statewide professional organizations (e.g., Higher Education Forum, MASE, MASSA, and others) to incorporate leadership and awareness training for school administrators in HIEs.**

*Outcome(s): By Year 3 Minnesota Institutions of Higher Education granting graduate degrees will offer at least one course or seminar dedicated to special education issues and IHE requirements.*

**Objective 1.5 Conduct staff development activities with general and special education staff to reduce the disproportionate placements of diverse student populations in special education programs.**

**Activities and Outcomes related to Goal 3 and Objective 1.5**

**1.5.1 Implement training that reduces disproportionate representation by improving the effectiveness of general education and special education's use of pre-referral interventions in determining special education eligibility for diverse populations.**

*Outcome(s): By the end of Year 3 participating districts will demonstrate a significant reduction in the referral of students from diverse cultural backgrounds for assessment and placement in special education programs. Based on formative evaluation measures, participating districts will show an increase in their capacity to develop and implement effective pre-referral strategies that meet third academic, multicultural and cultural needs of students of diverse populations.*

**1.5.2 Implement an incentive program that supports HIEs in the development of curricula focused on the educational service needs of diverse student populations.**

*Outcome(s): By the end of Year 3 all HIEs receiving a grant award will offer a course or workshop aimed at providing current and prospective special and general education teachers with the knowledge and skills necessary to meet the educational needs of students representing diverse populations.*

**Goal 2: Fully implement a coordinated, multidisciplinary interagency service system for children and youth with disabilities birth through 21 statewide.**

**Objective 2.1: Develop and implement statewide systems of interagency collaboration for all children with disabilities through age 21.**

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**Activities and Outcomes related to Goal 2 and Objective 2.1**

- 2.1.1 Develop and implement an interagency communication system between the 14 collaboration agencies and entities as mandated by Minnesota Statute 125A.023.

*Outcome(s): By the end of Year 1, a monthly interagency newsletter will be published that is disseminated to state and local agencies, including coordinating councils and county social service agencies. Also, by the end of Year 1, a statewide interagency Committee website will be established.*

- 2.1.2 Develop and conduct information dissemination activities to promote awareness of the statewide interagency system model that will be used to provide services to all students with disabilities by 2003.

*Outcome(s): By the end of Year 1, a defined eligible population of students with disabilities will be identified. Key components of an interagency service system model will be identified and formal interagency agreements will be established. Also, by the end of Year 1, interagency agreements and policies will be disseminated statewide via newsletter and website.*

- 2.1.3 Conduct staff development activities to implement systems of interagency collaboration for children to age 21 by 2003.

*Outcome(s): By the end of Year 1 key components of the training will be identified. Regional information dissemination activities will be complemented by the end of Year 2. By the end of Year 3 all local education and county agencies within each region will receive applied training. By the end of Year 5 all students with disabilities will be provided with an Individual Interagency Plan (IIP) that meets or exceeds current IDEA 97 requirements or the federal requirements in effect at that time.*

- Objective 2.2 Conduct statewide training to effectively involve parents of children with disabilities in interagency service delivery systems**

**Activities and Outcomes related to Goal 2 and Objective 2.2**

- 2.2.1 Provide outreach training and technical assistance to parents of children with disabilities on how to work with local interagency staff to identify and plan needed services.

*Outcome(s): By the end of Year 1 PACER will develop the training program focused on the implementation of Individual Interagency Plans (IIPs). By Year 2, four parent workshops will be conducted and 100 parents will receive individualized technical assistance. By the end of Year 5 PACER will deliver four workshops annually and will have provided technical assistance to more than 300 parents in the state.*

- 2.2.2 Implement training programs for parents of children with disabilities on their role on local advisory committees and state and local interagency coordinating committees. Alliance and PACER staff will design training for parents on how special education decisions are made at the local, state, and federal levels and how each impacts the education of children with disabilities. Training will include recommendations on how parents might participate as leaders at each level.

*Outcome(s): By the end of Year 1 follow-up results will show that 75 parents have acquired membership in special education and interagency advocacy councils. By the end of Year 5 Alliance and PACER staff will have conducted five statewide conferences and 123 parents will indicate membership in a respective advocacy group. Also, by the end of Year 3 PACER staff will have developed and disseminated to 1,000 parents in Minnesota*

2.2.3 Provide training to families that promotes knowledge and awareness of community agency responsibilities in the provision of services with specific attention to private and state insurance carriers, Medicare and Medical Assistance, and managed care organizations

*Outcome(s): By the end of Year 1 the Minnesota Association of Children with Mental Health Needs (MACMHN) will develop and implement training materials for 30 parents. By the end of Year 5, 150 parents will have received training and all informational products will be accessible from the Alliance website*

**Objective 2.3** Conduct statewide training to promote school to work transition opportunities for students through interagency collaboration and coordinated services

Activities and Outcomes related to Goal 2 and Objective 2.3

2.3.1 Provide outreach training and technical assistance to students who have reached the age of majority and parents on issues involving interagency roles and responsibilities in the transition from school to post school living (e.g., postsecondary education, training, employment, and community living)

*Outcome(s): By the end of Year 1 PACER and the Metropolitan Area Center for Independent Living will develop guidelines that can be used by parents and for students who have reached the age of majority to ensure that Minnesota Graduation Standards are included in the IEP or Individual Transition Plan (ITP). By Year 2 representatives from parent advocacy groups will have received training in the guidelines and will have conducted informational meetings in each Region. Also, by the end of Year 3 about 1,200 18-year-old parents will have received materials and ongoing technical assistance from PACER staff and over 1,000 students will have received self-advocacy training from the Metropolitan Area Center for Independent Living*

2.3.2 Conduct training to increase the collaborative, interagency capacity of Minnesota's 70 Communities' Transition Interagency Committees (CITCs) to assist youth with disabilities in the transition from school to adult life.

*Outcome(s): By the end of Year 2 Project Inwest staff will have conducted 11 workshops in which 130-150 professionals were provided with training in the guidelines. Guidelines will be finalized by Year 4 and include best practice recommendations. By the end of Year 5 approximately 1,500 professional staff will have received training in the guidelines*

**Goal 3: Ensure the availability of a qualified special education workforce in all regions and communities of Minnesota**

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**Objective 3.1** Conduct staff development training that prepares Minnesota's paraprofessional workforce to support special education staff in meeting the needs of students with disabilities.

**Activities and Outcomes related to Goal 3 and Objective 3.1**

- 3.1.1 Conduct staff development and information dissemination activities to increase knowledge and skills of paraprofessional staff.

*Outcomes:* By the end of Year 1 a core set of competencies will have been developed along with curricular materials. By the end of year 2 trainers in each Region will have received training from staff of the Statewide Paraprofessional framework and 17 workshops will have been held. By the end of Year 3 training will have been conducted annually in each Region and at each statewide paraprofessional conference. Also, by the end of Year 3 training materials will be incorporated into statewide requirements for paraprofessional staff.

- 3.1.2 Conduct training activities for special education staff and general and special education administrators in the area of hiring, supervising, and monitoring the job performance of paraprofessional staff.

*Outcomes:* By the end of Year 1 training and information dissemination materials will be developed and posted on the AllInOne website. By the end of Year 3 all three phases of the training program will be implemented on an annual basis via statewide general and special education conferences and regional workshops. Not including those who assess the website for information, approximately 2,000 teachers and administrators will participate in the multiphase training program.

**Objective 3.2** Implement licensing changes and staff development activities that increases supply and retention of a highly competent workforce of teachers of students with emotional and behavioral disorders (EBD).

**Activities and Outcomes related to Goal 3 and Objective 3.2**

- 3.2.1 Identify pre-service training competencies of teachers of emotional and behavioral disorders (EBD) to establish new licensure requirements.

*Outcomes:* By the end of Year 1 the advisory group will have developed a list of EBD teacher competencies that will be submitted to the appropriate agencies. By the end of Year 3 new EBD licensure will be instituted and incorporated into pre-service training programs. By the end of Year 3 all students entering into pre-service training institutions will be required to meet licensure criteria. Also, by the end of Year 3, EBD teachers will be provided with a monetary incentive to obtain licensure in the field of EBD.

- 3.2.2 Establish the Minnesota Institute of Emotional and Behavioral Disorders (MIEBD) to support the training of new and continuing EBD teachers.

*Outcomes:* By the end of Year 1 the Minnesota Institute for Teachers of students with Emotional and Behavioral Disorders will be established and training will be provided to 100 teachers initially. By the end of Year 3 the institute will be responsible for producing 250 fully licensed staff who formerly held state variance or waivers. Also, through program evaluation

activities. Institute inservice staff report increased skills in conducting functional behavioral assessments, coordinating individualized education plans, and developing suspension/expulsion alternatives for students.

**Objective 3.3** Conduct staff development opportunities and implement recruitment and information dissemination initiatives to ensure a sustainable special education workforce in areas where documented shortages exist.

**Activities and Outcomes related to Goal 3 and Objective 3.3**

**3.3.1** Conduct information dissemination activities and provide incentives to recruit teachers of students with specific learning disabilities (SLD).

*Outcome(s): By the end of Year 3, (a) recruitment presentations will be made to more than 1,000 prospective teachers in Minnesota's pre-service training programs, (b) 10-13 press releases and articles will be written and distributed to Minnesota newspapers (including college and university periodicals), and (c) 115-125 prospective teachers will be provided with a monetary incentive. Also, by the end of Year 3 Minnesota's expected shortage of SLD teachers will be reduced by at least 75%.*

**3.3.3** Conduct activities to increase networking activities among current teachers in low-incidence disability areas.

*Outcome(s): By the end of Year 1 state organizations of professionals of low-incidence disabilities will design a website. By the end of Year 3, the website will be fully functional and be used as a source to provide teachers with updates and other types of pertinent information.*

**3.3.2** Conduct an incentive program to attract professionals serving the needs of students in low-incidence areas.

*Outcome(s): By the end of Year 1 an incentive program will be developed, information dissemination activities will be completed and mentors and program recipients will be identified. By the end of Year 3, a 75% reduction will be found in low-incidence areas where shortages currently exist.*

**3.3.3** Develop an incentive program to train sign language interpreters and translitators to meet minimum competency from an approved program each year.

*Outcome(s): By the end of Year 1 an incentive program will be developed and program participants will be identified. By the end of Year 3 approximately 35 participants will have completed RID or NAD registration and will be linked to job opportunities in local education agencies.*

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**2. What interstate connections are planned?**

Minnesota plans to continue the following

1. A collaborative effort with Pennsylvania to deliver training for Orientation and Mobility (O&M) specialists through distance learning technologies
2. Reciprocity agreements with Wisconsin, North Dakota, and South Dakota that lowers the tuition rates for college and university students in pre-service teacher preparation programs
3. Negotiations are currently underway with the neighboring states of Wisconsin, Iowa, South Dakota, and North Dakota to address the lack of uniformity in the credentialing and licensing of teachers and related service personnel
4. Training modules and related materials developed to train paraprofessionals in Minnesota are currently in use in several states

**3. What strategies are planned for service delivery?**

- Train a cadre of Collaborating to Accommodate Performance Standards (CAPS) trainers capable of providing ongoing staff development to increase collaboration between general and special education within the state.
- Establish an internal training network (facilitated by the Alliance and the University of Minnesota's (U) staff) through the use of a listserv and a website.
- Establish alliances with advisory groups and representatives of member institutions of the Higher Education Forum, professional organizations in the state,
- Conduct training sessions throughout the state using Interactive Televised Video (ITV), a distance teaching and learning technology that is accessible in every Minnesota Special Education Region or local education agency.
- Develop training modules that outline a process of including Minnesota Graduation Standards in IEPs or Individual Emergency Plans (IEPs)
- Conduct statewide training will be conducted in each of the 11 Minnesota Special Education Regions by the Institute on Minority Development and the Alliance staff in cooperation with members of the interagency advisory committee.
- Alliance staff will work with Minnesota's Emotional and Behavioral Disorders Leadership Committee to identify knowledge and awareness activities of mental health issues that can be demonstrated in the general education setting at all grade levels.
- Alliance staff will conduct an annual system review on the mental health needs of youth and conduct related public relation activities (e.g., briefings, outreach)
- Alliance staff will develop and implement pre-service training packages for both general and special education teachers serving in a wide variety of settings (elementary, secondary, rural, metro, charter, etc., Charter schools, institutional facilities, etc.). Content of the training packages will include information on etiology, prevention and treatment issues of (a) attention deficit disorders, (b) depression, (c) Tourette's Syndrome, (d) oppositional conduct disorder, (e) chemical dependency, (f) eating disorders, and (g) anxiety disorders.
- Alliance staff will work with the Statewide Interagency Committee (SIC) and Minnesota's Emotional and Behavioral Disorders Leadership Committee to develop an interagency

agreement with the Dept. of Human Services (DHS), Children's Mental Health Section to implement an Individual Interagency Planning process for students with EBD.

- Members of the Alliance will: (a) design elements of interagency agreements that will incorporate the ILP requirements into the individual Interagency Planning (IIPs) process, (b) seek policy interpretations on data privacy, interagency services like psychological assessments and counseling, early intervention and treatment, and "third-party" billing issues. This agreement will be shared with the SJC and a formal adoption process will be developed to ensure the widespread application of the Individual Interagency Plans (IIPs). Alliance and Minnesota Department of Human Services staff will provide training on the Individual Interagency Plan process in day treatment sites, juvenile correctional institutions, and state funded mental health collaboratives.
- Develop a monograph that provides information about quality indicators of programs that serve females with EBD and conduct information dissemination activities at conferences and via the Alliance website about effective models of service delivery for females with EBD.
- Facilitate four meetings per year with the Statewide Assistive Technology committee to implement state technology priorities to address assistive technology needs of student with disabilities based on data contained in the report, Review of Selected Elements of IDEA '97 and Issue paper #3, Assistive Technology Issues in Minnesota.
- Conduct an annual assistive technology conference based on the priorities that are developed. Conference topics will be significantly expanded to attract general educators, administrators, and interagency staff representing various community agencies.
- The Statewide Assistive Technology Committee will assume responsibility for facilitating the development of statewide networks among various project groups (e.g., low incidence, transition, early childhood) to share policies and best practice information regarding technology devices and services. This information will be shared through the development of a dedicated Assistive Technology website designed to disseminate materials via professional organization newsletters and listservs.
- Revise the document, *Assistive Technology for Students with Disabilities: Guidelines for Assessment and Services* to identify successful assistive technology programs and practices occurring within the state and provide examples and program models that can be replicated by other local education agencies. The revised guidelines will be disseminated to all Minnesota school districts to incorporate assistive technology practices into local general education technology plans. Informational materials will also be developed to help general education administrators and staff better understand the role of technology in assisting students to succeed in educational settings. A "frequently asked questions (FAQs) section will be included in the guidelines to provide information for administrators to help them understand the obligations of school districts under IDEA '97. The FAQ section will be posted on the Assistive Technology website.
- Alliance staff will work with members of the Higher Education Panel and the Statewide Assistive Technology Committee to implement a five phase pre-service and in-service training model developed by the Research Institute for Assistive and Training Technology (RIATT). The training model includes:
  - Phase 1: Immediate Awareness training in familiarize 150 special and regular education staff with general assistive and educational technology principles

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- Phase II: Primary implementation that involves training 100 special and regular education staff to incorporate assistive technology into the design and implementation of IEPs of students with disabilities in their classrooms.
- Phase III: Secondary implementation to provide training to 50 special and regular education staff to complete the assistive technology Basic Competency Certificate.
- Phase IV: Professional training for 50 special and regular education staff leading to the completion of the Education Professional Competency Certificate
- Phase V: Leadership training to 25 select special and regular education staff to establish Assistive Technology Leadership Teams that will, in turn, provide training and ongoing consultation to local teams statewide. The Assistive Technology Leadership Teams will be one source that will sustain assistive technology initiatives beyond the SIG grant.

**4. What partnerships are intended?**

- Alliance staff will issue a subcontract to the University of Minnesota's Institute on Community Integration (ICI) to conduct Collaborating to Accommodate Performance Standards (CAPS) training activities as well as to coordinate the activities of the CAPS trainers
- Alliance staff and its contractual partners will work with members of the Higher Education Forum to implement collaborative pre-service training initiatives for prospective general and special education teacher-trainees
- Alliance staff will work with the Minnesota Emotional and Behavioral Disorders Leadership Committee to create an interagency advisory task force that includes parents and advocates and representatives from such state agencies as Health and Human Services, Corrections, and Children's Mental Health Collaboratives
- A subcontract will be established with the Institute on Minority Development to develop training materials based on the community change model addressing the needs of students with EBD that is being developed
- Alliance staff and the Emotional and Behavioral Disorders Leadership Committee will work together to study the components of UNITE, a model program for females with EBD
- Alliance staff and Minnesota's Emotional and Behavioral Disorders Leadership Committee will design training based on the monograph developed and deliver two workshops per year at state conferences attended by general and special education teachers, related service staff, and other health, human services and corrections agencies. In addition, they will replicate the effective components for females with EBD in five schools per year and evaluate effectiveness and they will conduct information dissemination activities at conferences via the Alliance website about effective models of service delivery for females with EBD.
- The State Technology Committee will develop a process with the Department of Administration's STAR Program (System of Technology to Achieve Results) to ensure that the needs of students with disabilities are included in efforts in statewide technology plans
- A subcontract will be established with the Institute on Community Integration, University of Minnesota, to support staff development activities to implement systems of interagency collaboration for children to age 21 by 2003

- A grant will be issued to the Metropolitan Area Independent Living Center for Independent Living to design guidelines and conduct self-advocacy training for young adults with disabilities who are transitioning to adult services
- Alliance staff will contract with trainers staff of Project Invest to conduct 11 regional (i.e., Educational Cooperative Services Unit) workshops on the guidelines each year for local secondary special education, county social services, secondary vocational education work experience coordinators, and correctional facilities staff.
- Staff of the University of Minnesota's Institute on Community Integration (ICI) will coordinate efforts with Minnesota's Statewide Paraprofessional Consortium to: (a) develop a set of core competencies required of all paraprofessionals, and (b) identify specialized competencies for selected learning environments (behavior management, assistive technology, early childhood, transition, etc.)
- A contract will be issued to the University of Minnesota's Institute on Community Integration (ICI) to implement the following three-phase information dissemination initiative. All training materials will be developed by ICI. Phases will be conducted concurrently on an annual basis and include:
  - Phase I Information about hiring strategies, sample job descriptions for paraprofessionals, orientation checklists, and performance evaluations
  - Phase II: Information about the use of skill assessments based on job descriptions and the integration of core and specialized competencies into development of training plans and personalized job descriptions of paraprofessional staff
  - Phase III Information about the use of self-directed training packages to help professional educators and administrators assess current status of paraprofessional competencies and to develop plans to meet their training need
- Alliance staff will develop an agreement with the Higher Education Forum to jointly address staff development needs of teachers of Emotional and Behavior disorders
- A contract will be issued to the Behavioral Institute for Children and Adolescents to assist Alliance staff and the Higher Education Forum in supply and demand analysis of EBD pre-service training in Minnesota and to establish guidelines of EBD teacher competencies.
- An advisory group representing Minnesota's Emotional and Behavioral Disorders Leadership Committee, general education teachers, administrators, Higher Education Forum, and Alliance staff will review Minnesota's proposed licensure for EBD and guidelines of EBD teacher competencies in surrounding states where reciprocity negotiations are currently underway, as well as those from the State of Indiana, a state that has developed an EBD service model that may be replicated
- Alliance staff will work with members of the Higher Education Forum to develop and implement a monetary incentive package for college and university students enrolled in participating IHE special education programs qualified to provide pre-service training leading to EBD licensure. A nomination process will be developed by the Alliance to allow 25 students to receive a \$1,000 incentive upon licensure in the field of EBD
- Alliance staff will work with the Emotional and Behavioral Disorders Leadership Committee and Higher Education Forum in a partnership program to implement training activities associated with the pre-service training competencies of teachers of emotional and behavioral disorders (EBD) to establish new licensure requirements. The training program will include

an annual summer institute and mentoring program that will focus training activities in such areas as: behavioral assessments, manifestation determination, suspension/expulsion, and implementing school-wide behavior management policies.

- Alliance staff will work with the Higher Education Forum to arrange for college credit that will lead to EOU licensure for participants. As necessary, the Institute will modify the content of its training to meet requirements.
- Alliance staff will work with the Higher Education Forum to provide monetary incentives for selected college and university students enrolled in internships in the field of Specific Learning Disabilities. A nomination process will be developed by Alliance to allow 25 students to receive a \$1,000 incentive upon receipt of SLD licensure.
- Alliance staff will work with state professional organizations to increase the effectiveness of current statewide networks of staff serving low incidence populations by providing technical assistance and information dissemination activities through website access.
- Alliance staff will work with state organizations representing low incidence disability areas to implement a recruitment and incentive system to attract new teachers and retain current teachers of students in low incidence disability areas (e.g., blind/deaf and visual impairments, deaf and hard of hearing, physical and other health impaired) to develop a recruitment, networking, retaining, and incentive system.
- Alliance staff and representatives of state professional organizations will conduct information dissemination activities (e.g., brochures, postings in colleges and universities) to solicit mentors, recruit and identify participants for incentive program.
- Alliance staff will work with the members of the Higher Education Forum who have approved training programs (e.g., St. Paul Technical College, College of Saint Catherine, University of Minnesota) to develop a recruitment and incentive system for 70 prospective interpreters and translators.
- Alliance staff will work with a joint committee of members of the Minnesota Administrators of Special Education (MASE) and the Minnesota Association of School Administrators (MASA) to design a program that addresses the training needs of school administrators. They will initially target training based on needs identified in Local Plans for the implementation of IDEA 97 to include topics involving discipline procedures (e.g., suspension and expulsion, manifestation determination, school-wide discipline strategies, assistive technology, and interagency collaboration in the planning process (e.g., transition plans, family service plans). Two annual in-service training sessions will be conducted in areas where needs are documented.
- Alliance staff will work with the Higher Education Forum, MASE, and MASA to develop and implement a leadership skill building curriculum focused on individuals seeking administrative licensure in Minnesota public schools.
- Alliance staff and members of the Higher Education Forum will develop a process for awarding four incentive grants through years 1-2 to Minnesota BIDs that agree to implement pre-service training activities aimed at meeting the educational needs of special education students with linguistic and cultural needs. Grants will be awarded to the following types of institutions: two general education teacher training programs, three special education training programs, one school psychology training program, one speech/language pathology training program, one school social work training program, and four additional programs so

be identified at a later date. The manual, Reducing Bias in Special Education Assessment, will be used as an overall guideline for developing pre-service training curricula.

- Alliance staff will work with the State Interagency Committee (SIC) to clarify roles and responsibilities and develop a model of interagency communication at the state level (including Minnesota's Special Education Advisory Council and the State Coordinating Committee for Part C Infants and Toddlers). They will work together to develop a communication model that ensures information dissemination systems are in place across 14 agencies at the regional level, i.e., 11 Educational Cooperative Service Units (ECSUs) and county level. In addition, they (a) will work to develop and disseminate a monthly newsletter dedicated to interagency initiatives that is disseminated statewide and includes information from member agencies of the State Interagency Committee and (b) will establish a website that will contain "Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) and news and information about interagency initiatives and the roles of local education agencies.
- The SIC will disseminate interagency service agreements and policies statewide via the SIC website, the SIC newsletter, the state Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC), and the Interagency Coordination Committee (ICC).

5. Who are the partners?

- Minnesota's Institute on Community Integration (ICI)
- Minnesota Institute for Teachers of Students with Emotional and Behavioral Disorders
- Minnesota Emotional and Behavioral Disorders Leadership Committee
- Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS)
- Minnesota Corrections Agency
- Minnesota Children's Mental Health Collaboratives
- Minnesota Statewide Interagency Committee (SIC)
- Department of Human Services (DHS), Children's Mental Health Section
- Minnesota Statewide Assistive Technology Committee
- Minnesota Administrators of Special Education (MASE)
- Minnesota Association of School Administrators (NASA)
- Diversity Leadership Task Force
- PACER Center
- Minnesota Association of Children with Mental Health Needs (MACHMN)
- Metropolitan Area Center for Independent Living
- Community Transition Interagency Committees (CTICs)
- Minnesota's Statewide Paraprofessional Consortium
- Behavioral Institute for Children and Adolescents
- Minnesota's Special Education Advisory Council
- Minnesota's Coordinating Committee for Part C Infants and Toddlers
- Minnesota Assistive Technology Committee
- Institute on Minority Development
- Metropolitan Center for Independent Living
- Educational Cooperative Services Units (ECSUs)
- Department of Administration's STAK Program (System of Technology to Achieve Results)
- Project Invast

- Members of the Minnesota Higher Education Forum (e.g., St. Paul Technical College, College of Saint Catherine, University of Minnesota)
- RIATT/NASDSE
- Members of the Minnesota Administrators of Special Education (MASE)
- Members of the Minnesota Association of School Administrators (MASA)

b. What type of subcontract or subgrants are intended to partners, LEAs, HESAs, PTIs and others (including lead agency under Part C)?

Subcontract costs will remain constant over Years 1-3 of this project.

**PACER Center:** A specific subcontract will be established with PACER Center for the amount of \$275,000 (\$175,000 federal and \$100,000 Part B funds). PACER will undertake statewide training and technical assistance to parents in the areas of: (a) including Minnesota Graduation Standards written students' IEPs; (b) increasing parent involvement in emergency teams; (c) strategies for implementing Individual Emergency Plans; and (d) training a cadre of parents in leadership roles on local emergency coordinating committees.

**Institute on Community Integration (ICI), University of Minnesota:** A subcontract of \$390,000 (\$225,000 federal and \$165,000 Part B funds) will be established with ICI. ICI will support the Division of Special Education in the full implementation of Minnesota's Interagency Collaboration Initiative, provide training to general and special education teachers focused on students' access to the general education curriculum (CAPS), and continue efforts to enhance the capacity of regions and local school districts statewide to train special education paraprofessionals.

**RIATT/NASDSE:** A subcontract of \$200,000 (\$140,000 federal and \$120,000 Part B funds) will be established to support several major outreach training efforts. RIATT will conduct training of general and special education teachers, paraprofessionals, and related service personnel on the fundamentals of assistive technology, assessment, planning, equipment utilization, and on the fundamentals of assistive technology assessment, planning, equipment utilization, and evaluation. This would also include the development of specific training materials for the ongoing use in Minnesota and will help to support the training of a cadre of individuals who will continue to provide training beyond the initial distance educational training.

**Behavioral Institute:** The Minnesota Department of Children, Families, and Learning, in partnership with DHS and Minnesota Association of Special Education Administrators (MASE), will develop a multi-agency institute whose goal is develop a full continuum of support for education of students with emotional and behavioral disorders. A subcontract will be established with the Behavioral Institute for Children and Adolescents for \$230,000 (\$180,000 federal and \$50,000 Part B funds). Subcontract activities will include the development of in-service and pre-service models with sufficient flexibility to meet the critical demand for fully certified teachers, retention and residency of fully certified teachers, paraprofessionals, and other specialists needed to assure the delivery of appropriate educationally related services to children with disabilities. Particular focus will be given to areas of extreme shortages such as teachers of students with emotional and behavioral disorders and low incidence disabilities.

**Minnesota Association for Children with Mental Health Needs (MACMIN)**: A subcontract in the amount of \$40,000 (federal) will be established with MACMIN to develop written guidelines designed for parents to use in the development and implementation of Individual Interagency Plans that include insurance carriers, Medicaid and Medical Assistance agencies, and managed care organizations.

**Institute on Minority Development**: A subcontract of \$50,000 (federal) will be established with the Institute on Minority Development for the purposes of providing training focused on cultural diversity and minority development issues throughout Minnesota. This will include the training of general and special educators, paraprofessionals, parents and family members, and others. This organization has worked closely with the Minnesota Division of Special Education in several major continuing education training programs over the past several years focusing on multicultural and diverse population issues.

**Metropolitan Center for Independent Living**: A subcontract of \$10,000 (federal) will be established with the Metropolitan Center for Independent Living to develop guidelines and training materials that can be used to promote students' transition to post-secondary education and training, employment, community participation, home living, and recreational/lifestyle opportunities.

**7. How will resources be pooled with other resources?**

SIG resources will be pooled with Part B discretionary funds.

**8. What specific SIG products, activities, initiatives and strategies are pertinent to Part C (birth to 3, infants, toddlers and their families) services and activities in your state?**

Alliance staff will work with the State Interagency Committee (SIC) to clarify roles and responsibilities and develop a model of interagency communication at the state level (including Minnesota's Special Education Advisory Council and the State Coordinating committee for Part C Infants and Toddlers). They will work together to develop a communication model that ensures information dissemination systems are in place across 14 agencies at the regional level, i.e., 11 Educational Cooperative Service Units (ECSUs) and county level. In addition, they (a) will work to develop and disseminate a monthly newsletter dedicated to interagency initiatives that is disseminated statewide and includes information from member agencies of the State Interagency Committee and (b) will establish a website that will contain "Frequently Asked Questions" (FAQs) and news and information about interagency initiatives and the roles of local education agencies.

All activities of the SIC are directed to all children.

Montana's State Improvement Grant has been designed to expedite the state's progress in creating an educational system in which all students receive the supports and services they require to be successful. Building upon the general education reform effort initiated during the 1987-88 school year - *Project Excellence: Designing Education for the Next Century*, this project encompasses identified initiatives that serve three purposes.<sup>1</sup> First, project activities are focused on aligning concurrent activities occurring within general and special education to create a unified and coherent agenda of school improvement in Montana. The project's title - *Excellence for All: Montana's Initiative for School Improvement* is intended to communicate this intent. The second purpose of this project is to target specific areas of need unique to the delivery of services to students with disabilities, creating new partnerships approaches, and solutions to improve outcomes in areas known to be in need of improvement. Third, this project will target challenges that Montana faces in the area of personnel preparation, recruitment, retention and professional development.

The work scope aligned with these outcomes is organized within three goal areas. These include (1) Standards-Based Reform; (2) Improved Outcomes for Students with Disabilities and (3) Personnel Recruitment, Recruitment and Professional Development. Work in each of these areas will be coordinated by a team comprised of individuals whose collective knowledge, skills and current areas of responsibility create a context in which identified activities have the participation and resources necessary for completion. The teams bring together people so that an issue can be dealt with at multiple levels within the system. For example, coordinated responses to training needs can be developed when teams involve individuals representative of the preservice, in-service, and school implementation levels. All project initiatives are designed with this systems approach to maximize the impact of project initiatives.

Formal partnership agreements have been established with administrators of the divisions within the Office of Public Instruction that are involved in school improvement efforts. This ensures that project efforts are integrated with other State plans and will be aligned in a way that maximizes available resources. Agreements are also in place within the state's parent training center, institutions of higher education, and other organizations within the state who will be represented on project work teams. In addition, agreement to collaborate in efforts to achieve the six identified outcomes for young children and students with disabilities in Montana is evidenced in the many letters of support provided by others who play a role in the state's educational service system.

**Montana**  
**Basic Information**

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<b>Project Title</b>	Excellence for All: Montana's Initiative for School Improvement
<b>Primary Contact Person</b>	Susan Bailey-Anderson
<b>Address</b>	Division of Special Education Office of Public Instruction P.O. Box 202501 Helena, Montana 59620-2501
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<b>Web site</b>	<a href="http://www.msteachers.state.mt.us/specialed/">http://www.msteachers.state.mt.us/specialed/</a>
<b>Date SIG Application was Written or Submitted</b>	December 15, 1999
<b>Begin and End Dates for Funding</b>	1st Year Period July 1, 2000 End June 30, 2001 3 Year Period July 1, 2000 End June 30, 2003
<b>Funded Amount</b>	\$350,000.00
<b>Who Wrote the Application</b>	Montana's Universal Affiliation Rural Institute on Disabilities Co-authors: 1. Dr. Gail McGregor 2. Dr. Tim Vogelberg 3. Mr. Ted Malone 52 Corbin, The University of Montana Missoula, Montana 59812 Phone: (406) 243-5467

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Summary of Funded State Improvement Grants in 2000  
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**Montana  
Improvement Strategies**

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**1. What products or activities are planned by the SIG?**

- Achieve a unified agenda for special and regular education school improvement
- Identify specific areas of improvement needed within special education and develop solutions involving collaborative partnerships
- Decrease personnel shortages in some areas, assist all school officials to achieve an understanding of methods to enable improved outcomes to occur for students with disabilities, and eliminate recruitment and retention barriers for teachers of students with disabilities

**2. What interstate connections are planned?**

Related services personnel collaborative agreements within LEAs in neighboring states will be developed with other states to alleviate critical shortages

Additionally, specialized training programs will be developed in cooperation with a consortium of states experiencing similar shortages to produce a sufficient supply of teachers as well as a better trained teaching force

**3. What strategies are planned for service delivery?**

**A. For Standards Based Reform the following methods will be implemented**

- Guidelines developed to link standards and curricula for all students
- Technical assistance will be available to all schools regarding comprehensive reform.
- Written guidelines and professional development for statewide assessment will occur.
- Clear expectations and performance goals will be developed for students with disabilities relative to the general curriculum.
- An integrated data management system will be developed among general and special education and vocational education
- Develop a continuous improvement process of monitoring LEAs, targeting school level performance data to demonstrate accountability.

**B. For Improved Outcomes Students With Disabilities**

- Increase emphasis on improved quality of transition plans and develop a mechanism to track post-school outcomes.
- Develop more consistent and thorough involvement of adult service providers in students' post-school employment and education
- Develop a collaborative model of service based delivery for mental health services to students with emotional support needs.

- Arrange for Low Incidence Disability Support Team to provide technical assistance to schools experiencing intense and unique needs of students the school system.
- Support the infrastructure of Montana's Regional Planning Councils who identify professional development needs in their respective geographical areas in the state.

**C. Promote Retention/Recruitment and Professional Development:**

- Establish collaborative agreements with personnel from various programs, if other states do likewise; all age levels
- No excuse developed among related services (personnel and educational supports) through IHE collaboration efforts, develop graduate student programs and general education preparation to improve outcomes for students with disabilities
- Effect teacher certification and IHE policy changes to eliminate perceived recruitment barriers
- Collaborate with institutions of higher education to provide pre-service training and ongoing professional development for personnel working within the early intervention system.

**D. What partnerships are needed?**

- Montana Institutions of Higher Education (IHE) preparing teachers of students with disabilities at all age levels
- PreK-12th Grade For Kids (PK-12)
- IHE pre-service preparation programs in education, para
- Montana CSPC Regional Council
- Montana Plains Regional Resource Center
- Montana Office of Public Instruction Department involved with school division improvement teams

**E. Who are our partners?**

- IHEs in Montana and neighboring states
- PK-12th Grade For Kids
- Regional CSPC Councils
- University of Montana Rural Institute for Education

6. What types of contracts or subgrants are intended to partners, LEAs, Title IAs, PTIs and others (including lead agency under Part C)?

- Montana is participating in a regional training consortium for educational interpreters in the classroom with the objective of preparing a sufficient quantity and quality of interpreters within the next five years. The coordinating agency for this program is Mountain Plains Regional Resource Center and the training institution is Front Range Community College, Westminster, Colorado.
- Teacher preparation programs at the University of Montana and Montana State University will be contracted to provide preservice and inservice programs for both general and special education teachers having the responsibility of improving outcomes for students with disabilities.
- CSPD Regional Councils, Parents Let's Unite For Kids, and support agencies providing services for students with disabilities will participate in the project as work teams designing activities to accomplish project goals.

7. How will resources be pooled with other resources?

In all project areas, Montana's Part B funds will be used to augment activities designed to implement program objectives.

The three project goals, (1) Standards Based Reform, (2) Improved Outcomes for Students with Disabilities, and (3) Personnel Recruitment, Recruitment, and Professional Development, will be coordinated by a team comprised of individuals whose collective knowledge, skills, and current areas of responsibility create a context in which identified activities have the participation and resources necessary for completion. The teams bring together people so that an issue can be dealt with at multiple levels within the system. For example, coordinated responses to training needs can be developed when teams involve individuals representative of the preservice, inservice, and actual implementation levels. All project initiatives are designed with this systems approach to maximize the impact of project initiatives.

8. What specific SIG products, activities, initiatives and strategies are pertinent to Part C (birth to 3, infants, toddlers and their families) services and activities in your state?

- Special education teachers in Montana are required to have specific early childhood training in special education. This has resulted in programming deficiencies for very young students with disabilities such as in appropriate team planning effective transitioning from Part C to K-12 preschool services. The University of Montana will be specifically contracted to perform the following activities:
  - Maintain a cadre of well-trained personnel to work with very young students with disabilities and their families.
  - Coordinate preservice and inservice training efforts with the state's Part C coordinator and develop distance education programs to assist persons teaching very young students with disabilities.



## **Nebraska**

### **Abstract or Conceptual Framework for State Systemic Change**

Following the most recent monitoring visit by the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services and a series of stakeholder meetings, Nebraska stakeholders identified four areas requiring prevention and intensive attention in order to improve educational outcomes for students with disabilities. They include:

1. Behavior management/discipline
2. Instructional improvement
3. Transition services
4. Parent involvement

Although issues, needs, and objectives are addressed in all four areas in this proposal, funds are being requested only for assistance with improving the infrastructure in local education agencies (LEAs) related to research-based behavior improvement and instructional strategies, and to ensure parent involvement in the Improvement Academy. The project also addresses systemic changes in state policies to leverage funds to support staff development programs to improve behavior and instructional strategies, improvement of transition services, service integration, and personnel supply; however, these objectives are supported by other funds.

The Nebraska State Improvement Grant (SIG) has two goals:

**Goal 1: Personnel Quality:** Nebraska will initiate systemic reforms and build local capacity to provide, integrate, and expand services to students with disabilities and their non-disabled peers. Part A of this proposal will provide evidence to support the need to build the capacity of LEAs to change systems to improve behavior and instructional strategies.

**Goal 2: Personnel Quantity:** Nebraska will ensure an adequate supply of personnel to meet the needs of students with disabilities and their families, and students through the Research-Based Behavior Improvement and Instructional Strategies Leadership Development Academy. Goal 2 activities are funded through resources from other state and federal programs. Two categories for which funding is requested (1 and 2) and five interrelated objectives that will be met through leveraging existing funds (3-7) are proposed.

**Objective 1:** Implement a Research-Based Behavior Improvement and Instructional Strategies Leadership Development Academy

**Objective 2:** Change state policies to leverage funds to support research-based behavior improvement and instructional strategies

**Objective 3:** Build statewide capacity to improve transition services.

**Objective 4:** Improve parent involvement in all aspects of LEA and state systems improvement efforts

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### **Summary of Funded State Improvement Grants in 2000**

*October 2000*

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**Objective 5:** Increase the capacity of LEAs and Educational Service Units (ESUs) to build systems of service integration.

**Objective 6:** Provide information regarding IDEA Regulations (IDEA-K) and state regulations

**Objective 7:** Ensure an adequate supply of well-prepared preservice special education and related services personnel

Three intermediate outcomes will result from the project:

1. Skills of personnel in the area of research-based positive behavior management and instruction will be improved.
2. Systems will be aligned and policy changed at the SEA and LEA levels to support students with disabilities and their non-disabled peers.
3. Increased leveraging of IDE-K policies and resources will occur to support future LEA capacity building for research-based positive behavioral management and instruction. The impact of the project will be higher achievement scores, higher graduation rates, and improved post-secondary outcomes for students with disabilities and their non-disabled peers.

**Nebraska**  
**Basic Information**

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Project Title	Nebraska State Improvement Grant		
Primary Contact Person	Mary Ann Losh		
Address	Staff Development State Department of Education Box 94937, 6 <sup>th</sup> Floor 101 Centennial Mall South Lincoln, NE 68509		
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Web site	<a href="http://www.ode.state.ne.us/SPED/sped.htm">http://www.ode.state.ne.us/SPED/sped.htm</a>		
Date NSIC Application was Written or Submitted	December 15, 1999		
Begin and End Dates for Funding	1 <sup>st</sup> Year Period	July 1, 2000	End
Bunded Amount	3 Year Period	July 1, 2003	June 30, 2003
Who Wrote the Application	\$325,816.00		

*Summary of Funded State Improvement Grants in 2000*  
October 2000

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**Nebraska  
Improvement Strategies**

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**1. What products or activities are planned by the SHG?**

In order to improve the achievement results for students with disabilities as well as their non-disabled peers the NE - SHG will:

- Develop a research based behavior and instructional improvement academy with follow-up assistance to improve local education agency infrastructure for behavior and instructional improvement.
- Develop parent involvement through the Parent Training Center.
- Effect systemic change in state policies to leverage funds to build local education agency capacity to maintain improved behavior and instructional strategies.

**2. What interstate connections are planned?**

- Dissemination of effective practices/training models in behavior and instruction to higher education in and out of state utilizing online technology resources
- Use of University of Kansas On-Line Academy and Institute for Research on Learning
- Out-of-state presenters and facilitators
- Assistance from Mountain Plains Regional Resource Center
- Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning

**3. What strategies are planned for service delivery?**

In order to improve the achievement results for students with disabilities as well as their non-disabled peers the NE - SHG will:

- In the first two years of the project develop the behavior and the instructional academy in summer institutes and weekend programs with the goal being the development of model school building implementation sites in eastern Nebraska.
- Repeat the same pattern of program development in western Nebraska in years three and four.
- Utilize the fifth year of the project for dissemination of products and activities to other Nebraska non-model schools including effective behavior and instructional practices on videotape.
- Develop a networking Web site among all model building academies to enable maximum sharing of successful academic practices.
- Leverage support for state policy changes through demonstrating effective behavior improvement and instructional strategies in the model schools.
- Locate other funding to continue project activities after the project ends.

**4. What partnerships are intended?**

- Nebraska's Higher Education programs
- Nebraska's Safe and Drug-Free schools program
- The Nebraska's Parent and Training Center
- Nebraska's Transition Project
- Nebraska's Local Education Agencies (both model buildings and others)
- Nebraska's State Department of Education - especially personnel development

8. Who are the partners?

(For assistance with behavioral improvement and instructional strategies)

- The University of Nebraska
- The University of Kansas
- Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL)
- NCR-TEC
- Nebraska Educational Service Units
- Nebraska's Parent Training and Information Center (for program planning and direct interventions)
- Mountain Plains Regional Resource Center
- Local Education Agencies

9. What types of contracts or subgrants are intended to partners, LEAs, IDEAs, FTFs and others (including lead agency under Part C)?

- University of Nebraska-Lincoln - academy development
- Nebraska's Parent Training Center Parent Partnership and Involvement
- Nebraska's Intermediate Service Units - Program Information Dissemination/Training Support and Follow-up
- Nebraska's model local education agency buildings
- Participating buildings at all levels represented (elementary, middle and high school) for a total of 14 buildings

10. How will resources be pooled with other resources?

- This academy model of program development has previously been utilized in Nebraska's Safe and Drug Free Schools Program. This SIG will parallel many of the same training processes and procedures using different content with a strong component on leveraging funds to support follow-up.
- Nebraska's IDEAs Part B funds used to support schools continuous improvement special education programs and CSPD will supplement the SIG
- Nebraska's Special Education Flexible Funding, lottery supported programs, and CSPD will assist ongoing program activities after the grant ends

E. What specific SIG products, activities, initiatives and strategies are pertinent to Part C (birth to 3, infants, toddlers and their families) services and activities in your state?

The academies to be developed will serve the function as leadership development in the model building programs. Emphasis will be placed not only on direct intervention, but prevention. This program emphasis will address services for very young students with disabilities to assist with the needs young children demonstrate. Additionally, the behavioral programs developed within the academies will project school wide initiatives which are consistent with early intervention for children with disabilities from birth to 3, and preventative strategies.

**North Carolina**  
**Abstract or Conceptual Framework for State Systemic Change**

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The purpose of the North Carolina State Improvement Project is to establish and implement, in alignment with the comprehensive system of personnel development, program support services to significantly improve the performance and success of students with disabilities in North Carolina. The four major goals established to accomplish this purpose are:

1. Improve basic performance for students with disabilities.
2. Increase the percentage of qualified teachers of students with disabilities.
3. Increase graduation rates and decrease drop-out rates of students with disabilities.
4. Improve parent satisfaction with, and support of, school services.

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*Summary of Pending State Improvement Grants in 2000*  
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**North Carolina**  
**Basic Information**

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<b>Project Title</b>	Improving the System of Education for Exceptional Children in North Carolina
<b>Primary Contact Person</b>	E. Lowell Harris
<b>Address</b>	301 North Wilmington Street, Raleigh, NC 27601-2825
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<b>Web site</b>	Not indicated
<b>Date SIG Application was Written or Submitted</b>	December 1999
<b>Begin and End Dates for Funding</b>	May 1, 2000 to April 30, 2005
<b>Funded Amount</b>	\$1,210,000.00
<b>Who Wrote the Application</b>	Fred Burns, DECS

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*Summary of Funded State Improvement Grants in 2000*  
*October 2000*

**North Carolina  
Improvement Strategies**

**1. What products or activities are planned by the SIC?**

- The main goal of the SIC is to establish a coordinated state-wide competitive system of personnel development and program support services. The following activities were designed to meet more detailed goals to improve basic skills performance for students with disabilities, increase the percentage of qualified teachers of students with disabilities, increase graduation rates and decrease drop-out rates of students with disabilities, and improve parent satisfaction with, and support of, school services.
- Demonstration and Training in Best Practices Centers across the State using explicit, structured approaches to teaching reading, writing, and mathematics.
  - Use training materials and resources developed at Best Practices Centers to provide statewide technical assistance and training to teacher education faculty and LEA staff development staff.
  - Infuse basic skills teaching procedures and materials into the on-line distance education teacher certification program.
  - Provide training for Principals and Assistant Principals in best instructional practices for students with disabilities.
  - Expand on-site field-based teacher certification education system, web-based system of resources, and information sharing across teachers, parents, administrators, and teacher educators.
  - Provide teacher incentives.
  - Establish a state-wide retention and recruitment campaign.
  - Establish Best Practices Centers in positive behavioral supports and infuse into teacher training and staff development in schools.
  - Establish a Vocational Education Diploma to broaden the options for graduation for students with disabilities.
  - Provide collaborative training for school staff and parents in developing mutual trust and shared responsibility for the progress of students with disabilities.
  - Collaborate with the board to encourage the establishment of parent-community school advisory committees in all LEAs.
  - Require organized parent representation in all Partnership planning and decision making.
  - Establish a formal procedure for state-wide and local parent review and evaluation of instructional services for students with disabilities.

2. What interstate connections are planned?

Not indicated

3. What strategies are planned for service delivery?

Planning and Management Through a Collaborative Educational Partnership:

- \* Administration and management of the project

A Network of Research-Based Training and Demonstration centers:

- \* Nine centers will be established to demonstrate the implementation of research-proven approaches to basic skills instruction and use of positive behavioral supports

Training, Technical Assistance, and Resources:

- \* The network of centers and the teacher training institutions will provide training of faculty and resources in the use of research-proven methods for instruction in basic skills

Parent Training, Resources and Support:

- \* Implement a system of parent training and support

Leadership Training and Support:

- \* Implement a system of continuous leadership training and support for Principals, Assistant Principals, and Special Education Directors

Teacher Recruitment and Retention Support:

- \* Establish a system of recruitment and training support to attract and retain special education teachers

Student Results and Accountability:

- \* Establish a sub-system of North Carolina ABC Accountability system to measure the impact of the state improvement project and other restructuring and improvement efforts on the performance and success of students with disabilities.

4. What partnerships are intended?

This proposal attempts to develop partnerships among the major agencies involved in the special education services and personnel preparation.

**5. Who are the partners?**

- The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction and Other State Agencies
- The Local Education Partners
- The University of North Carolina System of Higher Education
- Parent Agencies (Exceptional Children Assistance Center, Learning Disabilities Association of North Carolina, ARC of North Carolina)

**6. What types of contracts or subgrants are intended to partners, LEAs, UNEs, PTIs and others (including lead agency under Part C)?**

Nine centers (two in one school district) will be funded through subcontract from the State Improvement Grant. Subcontracts will be provided for the university coordination center and the parent collaboration, training, and resources program. These funds are designed to leverage additional resources, without which the goals of the project will be difficult to attain.

NEA funds, Silver grants, state funds, Title I and dedicated compensatory education funds, the Eisenhower Professional Development Program, Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Program, Bilingual Education, and Scholarships of Prospective Teachers

**7. How will resources be pooled with other resources?**

Resources available to each of the partner members should be used to impact on the common goals of partnership. Each partner member should be willing to reduce the use of human and budget resources to assist with attaining the overall goals of the partnership. This principle includes pooling of resources and joint pursuit of new resources.

**8. What specific NIC products, activities, initiatives and strategies are pertinent to Part C (birth to 3, infants, toddlers and their families) services and activities in your state?**

Not indicated

## **North Dakota**

### **Abstract or Conceptual Framework for State Systemic Change**

Through the systematic analysis of a wide range of needs assessment data, the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction and its State Improvement Grant (SIG) Partners have established three goals to improve the results for children and youth with disabilities.

**Goal 1:** North Dakota will have the necessary personnel to ensure effective services for children and youth with disabilities.

**Goal 2:** Personnel and professional development systems will build capacity of general education, special education, educational administration, and related services personnel and families to ensure quality education for all students in the least restrictive environment.

**Goal 3:** Youth with disabilities will attain positive post-school results through consistent statewide transition planning and implementation.

Goal 1 focuses on recruitment and retention of qualified special education and related services personnel in North Dakota, which ranks 49<sup>th</sup> in average teacher salary. Goal 1 strategies address shortages of personnel that are found statewide, as well as those that are unique for specific geographic regions or specialized fields. Additionally, issues of reciprocity, funding, and workforce utilization are examined.

Goal 2 addresses personnel and professional development needs. In planning this grant, the SIG Partners discovered many common agendas and a wide range of resources that can be brought to bear to provide more coordinated training of educators, parents, and others. Goal 2 will develop a coordinated approach to meeting personnel development needs statewide, including participation of SIG Partners in NASDSE Leadership Academy, a roundtable of providers, and numerous collaborative training activities. Because time was named as the number one barrier to personnel development, the SIG will capitalize on mechanisms (e.g., annual conferences or institutes, established inservice training days, etc.) currently in school improvement strategies that are data based and support access to the general education curriculum for all students. This includes positive behavior supports. The pilot sites will serve as the geographic focus of training that will result in a cadre of Field Based Consultants. This strategy will result in increased local capacity to provide technical assistance to school personnel. In addition to assistance with school improvement planning, instructional strategies, program evaluation, and related topics, the project will provide technical assistance to administrators that will result in use of consolidated funding from various sources (Title I, IDEA, Goals 2000) to accomplish more focused personnel development statewide.

In addition, Goal 2 provides support to strengthen the capacity of the state's parent organization. This will be accomplished through facilitating a roundtable of the organizations, and offering mini-grants for parent and family participation in various activities involving co-training. In addition, the grant will support a Parent Liaison to ensure that parent and family perspectives and concerns are considered throughout the project.

Goal 3 addresses inconsistencies statewide in secondary level transition planning and access to services of adult agencies. Improvement will be accomplished through support of Meeman Plains Regional Resource Center personnel to assist in identifying and addressing system barriers while simultaneously providing intensive technical assistance at the school district level.

The North Dakota State Improvement Grant will extend over a five-year period. SIG Partners will contribute significant in-kind resources to accomplish the goals and objectives. The IDEA Advisory Committee will provide guidance for the project.

**North Dakota  
Basic Information**

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Project Title	North Dakota State Improvement Grant				
Primary Contact Person	Mary Rose				
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Web site	<a href="http://www.dpi.state.nd.us/dpi/speced/">http://www.dpi.state.nd.us/dpi/speced/</a>				
Does SIG Application Was Written or Submitted	December 15, 1999				
Begin and End Dates for Funding	1st Year Period 5 Year Period	July 1, 2000 July 1, 2000	End	June 30, 2001 June 30, 2005	
Funded Amount	\$500,000.00				
Who Wrote the Application	Jean Newborg & Mary Rose ND Dept. Public Instruction Phone: 701-328-2277				

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**North Dakota  
Improvement Strategies**

**1. What products or activities are planned by the NIGT?**

- Develop an adequate supply of well-qualified education and related services personnel.
- Enable North Dakota educators and related services personnel to use administrative, curricular and instructional practices that focus on improved educational results, meaningful access to the general curriculum, and that involve parent involvement.
- Adults with disabilities will be enabled with the leisure activities and social relationships they develop as well as their level of independent living skills in their natural environments. Additionally, they will be enabled to obtain gainful employment and/or participate in post secondary learning opportunities.

**2. What interstate connections are planned?**

Exploring reciprocity credentialing with neighboring states for both special education teachers and related services personnel.

Training of educational interpreters in the classroom as part of a consortium agreement among Mountain Plains states with Front Range Community College at Westminster, Colorado. Regional distance learning training from University of North Dakota (UND) for interdisciplinary graduate training regarding low incidence disabilities such as autism.

Regional transition IEP Planning project through Mountain Plains Regional Resource Center.

**3. What strategies are planned for service delivery?**

**For Goal 1: Developing an adequate supply of well-qualified and related services personnel:**

- Improve preservice recruitment of candidates and retention of entry level educators.
- Facilitate recruitment and employment of personnel from outside the state.
- Increase retention of qualified personnel through developing an administrative and general education environment conducive to and supportive of appropriate educational outcomes for students with disabilities.
- Increase the diversity of North Dakota's education workforce through active recruitment and support of persons with disabilities and members of minority groups.
- Collaborate with legislative committees and participate in the Quality Schools for the 21st Century Committee to draft recommendations for legislative action relating to maintaining a workforce of sufficiently qualified personnel.
- Develop and implement a continuous feedback mechanism for North Dakota Department of Public Instruction (NDPI), LEAs, and other consumers to inform the North Dakota University System and individual HIE teacher preparation, educational administration, and related services programs of numbers and characteristics of needed personnel.

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**For Goal 2:** Preservice and professional development systems will build capacity of general education, special education, educational administration and related services personnel, and families to ensure quality education for all students in the least restrictive environment

- Enable preservice and professional development systems to develop common priorities and a coordinated action plan for improving the quality of preparation in general education, special education, educational administration, and related services.
- Enable preservice and personnel development centers to support comprehensive school improvement strategies that respond to documented needs and which support access to the general education curriculum for all students.
- Encourage family involvement organizations to participate in collaborative opportunities designed to build and sustain statewide capacity to support families of children with disabilities.

**For Goal 3:** Align positive post-school results for youth with disabilities through consistent statewide transition planning and implementation

- Collaborative relationships that support positive post-school results will be demonstrated by school and adult service providers.
- Strategies proposed will achieve the following outcomes:
  1. Change North Dakota policy barriers to improving learner outcomes.
  2. Hold schools accountable for student progress.
  3. Provide technical assistance to general and special education staff, with specific emphasis on school administrators.
  4. Address identified needs for inservice and preservice preparation.
  5. Address systemic problems identified in federal compliance reviews.
  6. Disseminate results of local capacity building and model project.
  7. Focus on improving results for children with disabilities in the geographic areas of the state having the greatest need.
  8. Assess the extent to which project activities/strategies have been effective.

**4. What partnerships are intended?**

- North Dakota Department of Public Instruction divisions and departments involved with school improvement planning.
- LEAs
- IHEs preparing educators
- North Dakota School Administrators Association
- North Dakota Teacher's Fund Retirement System
- NASSSE
- North Dakota LEAD Center
- North Dakota Education Standards and Practices Board
- Protection and Advocacy Project
- Training Learning Centers
- North Dakota Parent Training and Information Center

- North Dakota Adult Service Providers
- North Dakota's Governmental Administrators-Governors and Attorney General's Offices
- North Dakota Division of Juvenile Services
- North Dakota Residential and Corrective Facilities
- North Dakota Education Association
- North Dakota State School Boards Association
- North Dakota Department of Residential and Corrective Facilities
- North Dakota Departments of Vocational Rehabilitation, Workforce Development and Job Service
- North Dakota Council of Educational Deans
- North Dakota IDEA Advisory Committee

5. Who are the partners?

- North Dakota State Department of Public Instruction and its divisions and departments addressing School Improvement
- NASDSE
- The Department of Human Services
- Mountain Plains Regional Resource Center
- North Dakota's IHEs involved with preparing teaching, administrative, and related services personnel

6. What types of contracts or subgrants are intended to partners, IEs, IHEs, PTIs and others (including lead agency under Part C)?

- University of North Dakota has been contracted to coordinate the various preservice and inservice training components from their campus
- The Parent Training and Information Center (Pathfinders) will receive a subgrant to support parents' attendance at conferences, workshops, and planning meetings to ensure their participation

7. How will resources be pooled with other resources?

- The University of North Dakota will participate in the project through providing indirect costs, office space, payroll and accounting services, and other office expenses associated with the training component of the project.
- Part B funds will augment project activities which dovetail with ongoing SIGA goals and objectives
- Mountain Plains Regional Resource Center's technical assistance for post school employment outcomes and the appropriate development of Transition IEPs will be a major component of Goal 3's Transition emphasis.

8. What specific SIG products, activities, initiatives and strategies are pertinent to Part C (Birth to 3, infants, toddlers and their families) services and activities in your state?

A major project task will be the development of an interagency summit meeting in North Dakota early in the Fall of 2000. Parent information agencies and other organizations and other agencies working with very young students with disabilities will become involved in cooperative planning of quality services for these children from the beginning of their lives. Some of these agencies are Family to Family Network, Federation of Families, Protection and Advocacy, and Sacred Child. As part of their planning activities, these agencies and organizations will share information regarding the focus and strengths of each program, determine areas of overlap, areas of need, common training needs, and common priorities. In addition to developing improved communication and understanding of each other's areas of expertise, this activity is intended to achieve collaborative relationships that will lead to opportunities to build capacities of the organizations. This will enable them to have better informed families of children with disabilities and be more effective partners in planning for children's needs. Follow-up joint activities for these same parent organizations will include specific training opportunities that will build their organization's capacities to provide training for parents. One of the products of this planning summit will be a Resources Directory which will facilitate the location of appropriate services for children between and among agencies.



The purpose of the Oklahoma State Improvement Grant (SIG) is to promote a systems change effort to ensure that all personnel who work with children with disabilities are prepared and supported in providing a high quality education. The grant is designed to meet the critical needs in Oklahoma for preparing inclusive personnel for educational settings while reducing personnel shortages and providing the ongoing training and retaining of all service providers working with children and youth with disabilities.

The plan of operation of the grant is created to respond directly to specific needs for improvement. These needs were identified through focus group meetings with diverse groups of stakeholders over a seven month period of time. Stakeholders included parents, state agencies that provide services for children and youth with disabilities, institutions of higher education (IHE), local education agencies (LEA), early intervention (IDEA Part C), the parent training and information center, and individual representatives from the fields of general education, special education and related services. Needs were also identified through a thorough analysis of over twenty pieces of state data including student performance, personnel development, findings of the Office of Special Education Programs' (OSEP) and the State Education Agency's (SEA) most recent compliance data, state data reports, personnel data reports, the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education supply and demand study, SEA statewide needs assessment and CSPD Regional Action Team needs assessment.

The plan for Oklahoma's state improvement grant includes two major goals:

**Goal 1:** Prepare children and youth with disabilities to meet challenging state standards and make successful transitions to adult life through the establishment of a sustainable model of personnel preparation and professional development.

Within this goal multiple partnerships will be established between the SEA, families, IHEs, LEAs and communities to more effectively prepare and support inclusive personnel at both the IHE and LEA levels. This will take place through the redesign of the content and delivery of preservice preparation programs and the creation of regional professional development schools within LEAs.

**Goal 2:** Ensure an adequate supply of qualified personnel to address regional shortages and to meet the needs of children and youth with disabilities by strengthening an infrastructure to support a comprehensive, coordinated system of recruitment, retention and retaining activities.

Within this goal, existing recruitment, mentoring, and other teacher support activities will be expanded. A broad based state level committee will be established to study issues in the area of recruitment, retention and retaining and make recommendations regarding special education and related service personnel needs in the state.

**Oklahoma**  
**Basic Information**

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Project Title	Oklahoma State Improvement Grant
Primary Contact Person	Margaret Bergau
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Date SIG Application was Written or Submitted	December 14, 1999
Begin and End Dates for Funding	July 1, 2000 to June 30, 2005
Funded Amount	\$1,024,266.00 (est.)
Who wrote the Application	Not indicated

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## Oklahoma Improvement Strategies

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### 1. What products or activities are planned by the SIG?

Oklahoma's State Improvement Grant (SIG) will promote a systems change effort to ensure that all personnel who work with children and youth with disabilities are prepared as well as supported in providing a high quality education. Through two major goals, the grant is designed to meet the needs to prepare inclusive personnel in educational settings, as well as reduce personnel shortages. Ongoing training and retaining of all service providers that work with children and youth with disabilities will be conducted as part of the grant.

**Goal 1:** Prepare children and youth with disabilities to meet challenging state standards and make successful transitions to adult life through the establishment of a sustainable model of personnel preparation and professional development.

**Goal 2:** Ensure an adequate supply of qualified personnel to address regional shortages and to meet the needs of children and youth with disabilities by strengthening an infrastructure to support a comprehensive, coordinated, system of recruitment, retention and retraining activities.

Under Goal 1 Oklahoma will establish multiple partnerships between the State Education Agency (SEA), families, Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs), Local Education Agencies (LEAs) and communities. This will aid in the preparation and support of inclusive personnel at the IHE and LEA levels. This will take place through the redesign of the content and the delivery of preservice programs, along with the creation of regional professional development schools (PDS) within LEAs.

Under Goal 2, Oklahoma will expand activities through existing recruitment, mentoring and other areas of teacher support. In order to create a personnel development infrastructure, Oklahoma will establish a broad based state level Recruiting, Retaining and Retraining (RRR) committee that will develop a strategic plan for personnel development: Blueprint for Systemic Change in Recruiting, Retaining, and Retraining Oklahoma Special Educators and Related Service Providers. An online academy will be accessed to support research-based content for sustained professional development. Through the online academy and other projects, the SIG will work to build the capacity to prepare personnel and also assist in the institutionalizing these capacities by providing consultation and support necessary.

### 2. What interstate cooperatives are planned?

Through the SIG and in an effort to provide support for the reform of special education, the establishment of Preparing Inclusive Personnel (PIP) Projects will serve as a collaborative partnership between the Oklahoma State Department of Education, (OSDE), IHEs, LEAs and families. With the establishment of the statewide RRR committee, representatives from various agencies and professional organizations from all over the state will come together to develop an

infrastructure that will anticipate and respond proactively to the supply/demand, demographic and quality issues involving personnel issues.

**3. What strategies are planned for service delivery?**

Under Goal 3, the SIG will provide incentive funds to schools in Oklahoma for creating PDSs. SIG subgrant funds will be used to support HIE's and LEAs in developing PDS relationships. The PDS will serve as model practice sites, and teachers from these schools will work with UH faculty, including family faculty to reform, revise and deliver general and special education pre-service curriculum and instruction. This will improve the preparation of special educators and related services personnel to provide family-centered practice in serving students with disabilities. The statewide RRR committee will develop a strategic plan for personnel development. The police academy will support the OSDE's efforts to improve prelections development through the delivery of existing modules in the areas of positive behavioral supports, classroom use of instructional technology and reading interventions.

**4. What partnerships are intended?**

All partners are part of the SIG effort to promote a systems change effort to ensure that all personnel who work with children and youth with disabilities are prepared and supported in providing a high quality education.

**5. Who are the partners?**

The partners are as follow:

OSDE, HIEs, families, LEAs and Members of the Statewide RRR committee which include representatives of the following agencies and professional organizations.

- The Cooperative Council for Oklahoma School Administrators (CCOSA)
- University Affiliated Programs (UAP)
- Statewide Training and Regional Supports (STARs)
- Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education
- Oklahoma Education Association (OEA)
- Oklahoma Directors of Special Services (ODSS)
- Oklahoma Parent Training and Information Center
- Speech Language Pathologists
- LEA Teachers
- School Psychologists
- Occupational and Physical Therapists
- Par C

6. What types of contracts or subgrants are intended to partners, LEAs, HIEs, PTIs and others (including lead agency) under Part C?

The Oklahoma SIG will fund four partnership-based PIP Projects through a competitive subgrant process. Subgrants will only be awarded to partnerships consisting of an HIE or consortia of HIEs and LEAs, and families. HIEs will be encouraged to partner with other HIEs to extend the range of project impact across the state.

7. How will resources be pooled with other resources?

- Support of the Oklahoma State Board of Education and the State Superintendent of Public Instruction for the overall goals of the project
- OSDE statewide publications for dissemination of information
- Integration of OSDE's state plan for Elementary and Secondary Education Act
- CSPD Strategic Plan incorporated into the State Improvement Plan
- OSDE's Regional Education Centers for dissemination of information and access to a media library and emergency coordination
- OSDE's state of lead agency for Part C
- OSDE's statewide transition services for system change grant
- Coordination/collaboration for personnel development with a network of agencies
- In-kind support from Part C discretionary and capacity building funds to supplement a variety of SIG activities

Other partners with partners include:

- The OAP to develop and deliver training for family faculty,
- The OK Parent Training and Information Center to assist with the family faculty institute,
- Consultants from NCATE professional development school sites, and
- OCUSA to provide collaborative professional development for administrators

8. What specific SIG products, activities, initiatives and strategies are pertinent to Part C (birth to 3, infants, toddlers and their families) services and activities in your state?

Participated in the RRR Committee and the results of this committee's work does include Part C participants and beneficiaries. Related service providers are critical personnel utilized in delivery of services under Part C. Therefore, activities under both Goal 1 and Goal 2 are pertinent to Part C. Throughout the State Improvement Plan (SIP), activities are outlined specific to Part C and reinforce the continuation of collaboration in the STARS program. The OK State Department of Education is the lead agency for Part C.